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To Mr George Carter
from Mrs Sarah
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TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF RUTLAND,

ETC., ETC.

My Lord Duke,

Highly complimented as I feel by your Grace's kind condescension in accepting the dedication of this unpretending little work, many misgivings arise in my mind that it may prove undeserving that patronage so graciously accorded. I have not the vanity to think that any observations of mine, although resulting from long and hardly-earned experience, can impart any new light to such scientific Foxhunters as yourself. Your Grace's position, as Master of one of the oldest packs of Foxhounds in the world, would suffice to make you equally, if not better, acquainted with all those details relative to Foxhunting and the management of hounds upon which I have descanted in the following pages. Throughout these will appear many remarks upon the occupants of the Belvoir kennels, which were never penned in anticipation of their appearing in a separate volume, or presuming upon the honour of your Grace's patronage. On this point I trust to be acquitted of undue preference for that pack of Foxhounds, of which I have often before had occasion to make mention in the most laudatory terms.

With every sentiment of respect,

I have the honour to remain,

My Lord Duke,

Your most obliged and obedient Servant

K. W. HORLOCK.

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SYSTEM OF KENNEL

AND

SCIENCE OF FOXHUNTING.

CHAPTER I.

SIRES AND DAMS.

The Arcana of breeding Foxhounds—Quality to be regarded before quantity—Sires and Dams of approved characters—Breeding judiciously *versus* breeding extensively—Jasper a case in point:—"Quo semel est imbuta recens"—The author of "The Noble Science" and the Quagga—Mulish facts are stubborn facts—Symmetrical proportions—Heads before tails—John Ward's opinion on large "knowledge-boxes"—The late Squire of Tedworth and Soloman—Shoulders and hind-quarters—Field and kennel huntsman—"Nemo est ex omni parte beatus."

ONE of the most difficult tasks devolving on huntsmen to foxhounds, consists in the proper selection of Sires and Dams, for the purpose of maintaining the pack in its integrity and efficiency. In very large kennels, a corresponding number of whelps are annually produced, and to ensure a good-looking entry, many bitches are used as mothers before their characters have become thoroughly developed in the field. This is, to say the least of it, a very hap-hazard mode of proceeding, yet is such a practice too prevalent where draft-hounds are con-

sidered the perquisites of the huntsman. There is another very obvious inducement, besides the gratification of exhibiting a very handsome entry. Those who breed on a very extensive scale, even with the drawback of distemper, may feel tolerably secure of being able to put forward a large and clever lot of young hounds, from which a second draft has to be made later in the summer, when the time of danger from distemper has passed; and yet, with all this outward and visible show, are there not some—many, perchance—chosen fathers for their outward good looks more than for their parents' good works? Whatever huntsmen and masters of foxhounds may argue to the contrary, we know quite well, that a very handsome young foxhound will not be put aside for the shortcomings of his sire or dam. The excuse is—"Give him a trial, he comes of a good sort, and ought to keep his place;" to be more explicit, we will give a case in point *exempli gratia*, dozens of which have fallen under our own observation.

Jasper, a young dog of prepossessing appearance, enters well, goes through his first season brilliantly, and up to Christmas of the second season performs his part to admiration. A frost sets in, the bitch-house is soon filled, and Jasper is introduced to the seraglio, taking it for granted that he will hold on as he commenced. With change of weather, and after a fortnight's frost, a change has taken place in Jasper's conduct, who begins to cut corners, right to cry, and flashing over the line in highly condemnatory style. The

mischief is done—Jasper has stamped his image upon three litters of whelps. Six couples are put out to walk, and two return to the kennel so exceedingly handsome, that the master cannot consent to part with them. Their dams are excellent, steady line hunters, without much dash or flash. Why should not their progeny follow in their footsteps? Yes, this is the question which no master of foxhounds can answer: why the bad propensities of the father should generally prevail over the good ones of the mother. Yet so it is.

Mr. Delmè Radcliffe, in his "Noble Science," relates a similar fact which came under his own notice, where a mare, having been first put to a quagga or zebra, produced several foals afterwards by different horses, all of which were more or less affected by the stripes of the quagga. He adds, "There was no fancied peculiarity, no indistinct semblance of action or manner, but ocular demonstration of certain plain and indelible signs of stripes peculiar to one animal, affording incontestible evidence of his blood." The "going back," as old huntsmen tell you, in colour, disposition, and appearance, is of continued occurrence, making the greatest caution necessary to what sires the most promising young brood-bitches are at first put, since every succeeding litter may be injuriously affected by want of judgment in this one instance.

We have never considered it safe to breed from any hound, male or female, until they had passed through three seasons, by which time any evil propensities will most probably have shown them-

selves ; and with regard to sires, it is far better to put one of four or five years' experience to younger bitches, than to use those of the same age. There are faults in form also, as well as in faculties : we rarely see an animal of faultless proportions. It has been generally held amongst agriculturists, that cattle, sheep, and pigs should be short on their legs and light in bone ; but we remember hearing Mr. Northeast, a celebrated breeder of Southdown sheep, and steward of the late Assheton Smith, express a contrary opinion. We were looking over the entry at Tedworth during the master's absence, and I pointed out a young hound of lengthy frame, standing very low.

"Yes, sir, that young hound is very clever, and what breeders of foxhounds so much admire—very near the ground ; but we breeders of sheep like them rather high on the leg."

"Why ?" we asked.

"For two reasons," was his reply,—"first, because they stand well up in the penning when at the fair ; and secondly, because they come cleaner into the fold at night. After walking over greasy fallows, short-legged animals would have the dirt sticking to their bellies in wet weather, and be useless as a working flock."

We were satisfied with this observation, which has held a place in our memory ever since, confirming us in the opinion that horses and hounds may be bred also too low on the leg.

Upon the essential points in the framework of a foxhound, which, combined or properly connected,

form what we call symmetry, experienced masters and huntsmen are very generally agreed; but on other and less important points there exists a diversity of opinion, even amongst the learned in such matters. One admires the greyhound forehand with

> "Head like a snake,
> Neck like a drake,
> Chest like a bream,
> Back like a beam."

Others, like Gallio, care for none of these things, preferring heads rather square than long or thin; —about necks, indifferent, provided they are not too short and thick, preferring wide ribs to deep chests, and arched loins to flat ones. If a hound has plenty of brains, it matters little as to the shape of the skull in which they are contained; and if his neck is not too short to prevent his nose touching the ground, it is long enough to answer the purpose for which it was given him, and we incline to the opinion that the coarser-necked ones are generally found to be the better hunters.

A stranger, when for the first time meeting the late John Ward's foxhounds, was making comments —not very complimentary—in his hearing on their large heads, when the jocose master, turning round, said, "Your observations, sir, are very true; our hounds possess rather large knowledge-boxes, but there is this advantage connected with them: their heads are so heavy, that when once their noses reach the ground, they manifest great reluctance in raising them again."

His friends were not slow in comprehending the sarcasm intended by this rejoinder, for Mr. Ward's pack had a wide-spread reputation for excellent noses; and we remember a large square-headed hound named Soloman, presented by him to Assheton Smith, when first commencing the formation of his country in Wiltshire, without whose assistance he himself told me he could not have killed a fox. For choice, we would select a square head in preference to an oblong one, because we have, through an extensive experience, seen the greatest amount of sagacity in the canine species exhibited by such knowledge-boxes. Then as to shoulders, doctors differ, some preferring the hare and others the horse-shaped. A large-shouldered horse has never met with our approbation—we don't mean a heavy shoulder, for we think the power of the horse, the hound, and the hare all lie *behind* the shoulder—the advancing power before, the propelling power behind, in back, loins, and hind-quarters; and as facts prove more than fancies, we mention an example in a hunter ridden by us for many years.

This horse had a small low shoulder, thin ewe neck, very crooked fore-legs, turning out his toes like a dancing-master, so much so, that we were obliged to ride him in laced boots; but behind the saddle lay all his strength; large ribs, immense loins, and very muscular hind-quarters, with straight hocks—in fact, he seemed to go entirely upon this part of his body, his fore-quarters acting merely in a pioneering capacity. For ten years we rode him

successively, as well as successfully. Few horses could beat him in speed—none in fencing; and although standing only fifteen hands and an inch high, he could top anything we sent him at, and we were not particular in those days whether we rode at a five-barred gate, six-foot wall, or a double ox-fence. At the age of fifteen he was dismissed the stables, from an incurable propensity to crib-biting, and turned out for the remainder of his days in pastures green during summer, and a snug farm-yard, with sheds, in winter, without a speck or blemish—not even a windgall upon one of his legs. Admitting the great attraction of a neat head, well set on a beautifully curved neck, with fine shoulders and straight fore-legs, nevertheless, judicious breeders of foxhounds are not so much taken with outward appearances as to neglect other more important qualifications. Stoutness and a good nose are with them the first considerations, with frame exhibiting more power than beauty of outlines.

CHAPTER II.

Huntsman and Whipper-in—General want of harmony between them as to the occult science—He comes too near who comes to be denied—Old S—— and his successor in office—The test of sound discretion in breeding foxhounds—An instance of its failure in a large hunting establishment—John Ward's deliberation—Early whelps the strongest and straightest—Difficulty of selecting the best—Dark colours preferable to light.

It does not follow as a matter of course that the most talented field huntsman is equally clever as a breeder—the reverse, we might say, is generally the case. Immense numbers of young hounds are annually produced, yet quantity does not compensate for loss of quality. Every huntsman, when first installed in office, has this *onus probandi* thrown upon his shoulders, and how is he to meet it? As whipper-in, his knowledge of breeding, however, must be very limited, since huntsmen, from jealousy, rarely admit their probable successors into their confidence; and in large establishments whippers-in are almost excluded from the kennel, the feeder acting as assistant to the huntsman in all these matters. The register of marriages and births has been hitherto to the whipper-in a sealed book. He has seen by the published list how each entry is bred, and knows the characters and dispositions of those parents which have fallen

under his own observation; but of old pedigrees and performances he knows nothing; or why Chorister has been mated with Dorcas—in his opinion, perhaps, a very poor cross.

We were conversing not very long since with the first whipper-in to one of the oldest packs of foxhounds in England, and in allusion to his huntsman—a man of the highest celebrity as a breeder, then far advanced in years—we expressed our anticipations of his becoming a brilliant star also, under such superior tuition.

"As to field business, sir," he replied, "I have had a capital master, but as to breeding and kennel management, Mr. S—— is very chary of giving me the least information—to speak plainly, he is very jealous of me as likely to succeed him."

This whipper-in is now huntsman, and we have had no opportunity, since his promotion, of judging personally whether his talents have been equal to the responsibilities in this new situation. That very clever whippers-in do not invariably turn out clever huntsmen, is a truism needing no repetition. As to breeding foxhounds which shall stand the trial of three or four seasons, that is, as we have before stated, a very difficult matter; and we have known many of the very cleverest huntsmen, gentlemen, as well as professional men of world-wide reputation in the field, who have signally failed in the stud. Some of these have bred extensively—too much so—sending out from fifty to eighty couples of whelps annually, and putting forward about twenty couples for the next season's

entry. Yet the fallacy of their judgment is shown by their own kennel-list. We have one of these now before us, containing over seventy couples of hounds altogether, including the year's entry. Now we shall see, by looking to the head of the list, how this yearly supply of forty young hounds or more stands.

At seven years old, there are only five hounds remaining in the kennel. At six, nine. At five, twelve only. That is, out of a hundred and twenty hounds entered during the three years, twenty-six only are deemed worthy, at the end of that time, to hold their places in the pack. What has become of the other ninety-four? Gone to France or India, or, peradventure, swelling the ranks of minor establishments, which cannot breed their own hounds. Again, how many out of this large body have been considered sufficiently meritorious to be used as sires? Six individuals only, and to our certain knowledge three of these were the sons of *very handsome*, though very faulty, fathers. There is the mischief—hence the falling off in the four or five-year-old hounds. The master could not resist the temptation to breed from a very clever-looking one, although fully cognizant of his foibles. He was proud of parading a smart handsome entry on the flags, and paid the smart accordingly, by witnessing the gradual thinning of their ranks, at the end of each campaign.

In analyzing the contents of many large kennels, a considerable amount of heterogenous ingredients will too often be found, which make a

good show when paraded at the place of meeting, but help only to swell the chorus or fill the pack. How very few really good stanch hounds can be selected out of any pack. We know, by dearly-bought experience, what a lot of rubbish is contained even in unentered drafts from kennels of long-established reputation! The strength and efficiency of the pack depends upon the number of three, four, and five-year-old hounds you can bring into the field—these being the working bees of the hive—the others, in comparison, mere drones—and a good number of these veterans prove incontestibly the judgment of the breeder. We consider a foxhound of five years to be just in the zenith of his power, and if of a stout, hard, running sort, will hold his own for two or three seasons more. We have possessed hounds in their eighth season, running at the head of the pack, and have still a terrier living who has passed his seventeenth birthday, and, until within a few months, retaining all his faculties of nose.

The renowned John Ward was, of all his contempory masters, the most successful breeder of foxhounds, and although hunting four days a week latterly, in a country infamous for laming hounds, his entry did not exceed ten or twelve couples, the majority of which generally went right. He would deliberate sometimes for a week what sire ought to be put to a certain dam, and the result of his caution rarely showed an error in judgment. Early whelps are always the strongest and straightest on their legs, as a general rule, being like oysters,

good only if produced whilst there is an R in the month. Early spring weather exercises a very beneficial influence over all animals—beasts as well as birds—their frames being invigorated by the cold; and we are told that Swedish peasants dip their chickens in cold water as soon as they have escaped from the egg-shell, which unceremonious process they aver renders them impregnable to the attacks of roup and other diseases common to poultry kind. Upon one point we are satisfied by long experience, that foxhound whelps born in February and March are decidedly superior in constitution, frame, stoutness, and straightness of limb, to those making their advent into this wicked world at a later period, and consequently better able to contend with the distemper. So thoroughly convinced were we upon this point, that unless whelps could be produced from the most favourite dam before the middle of April, we preferred passing her over until the next season, to breeding a litter out of season.

As to the selection of whelps, some of which must be destroyed unless there is a foster-mother ready to take them, there exists a diversity of opinion amongst professionals—some contending that the lightest will prove the best; others that the mother ought to be left to make her own selection; others deciding (as a toss up) by heads and tails; others again by colour. It has been said that "a good horse cannot be a bad colour," but there are, in our opinion, horses of some colours which never can be good, *i. e.*, not so good as those

of stronger colours. Why, we don't know, but we have often remarked that light chestnut horses are generally of a *wishy-washy* constitution, with fretful and nasty tempers, and impatient of delays, as well as hard days. Dark colours have ever claimed our preference in foxhounds, as also in horses. Black and tan, or black and white, with dark muzzles—dark badger or hare-pied. Of the lemon hue, like the chestnut, we entertain a doubtful opinion; and white entire we don't admire.

CHAPTER III.

WHELPS, ETC.

Certain proportions necessary in brood-bitches—Large litters objectionable—How to obviate this excess—Treatment of lady foxhounds—Air and exercise—Lodgings at night—Paddock and boxes for whelps—Cutaneous eruptions—Remedies—Foster-mothers.

As to the selection of whelps, where all are, as far as human ken can go, of equal pretensions, unless influenced by colours, you must, if you can, keep those likely to prove the best; and your thoughts will bear a very near resemblance to our own when putting a puppy away, which probably might have proved better than any one of the litter we had chosen. This is a very trying occasion, and none but very anxious masters or huntsmen experience the doubtful feelings and extreme reluctance with which they are obliged sometimes to consign half a litter of well-bred foxhounds to the water-butt or fish-pond. We have invariably, when the opportunity occurred, used younger mothers as wet-nurses to the progeny of a favourite dam, although thereby losing the services of the former for the best part of the season. Terriers, spaniels, and other females of the canine species, may rear a couple of whelps indifferently, but for fox-

hounds there is nothing equal to a foxhound foster-mother.

Objections have been raised to sires of five and six years old, on the ground that their progeny will prove less robust than those of younger years. Experience does not lead us to such a conclusion, as we have seen the strongest litters from rather old hounds, when mated with young mothers. The reverse of this rule will not hold good; the offspring of old dams may be very clever, but they will be small, the generative power in the mothers having been reduced. There are many, however, though, good as gold, which never can be of any real benefit to the kennel as mothers, and it is time thrown away if they are selected for this purpose. There must be an existence of certain expansive proportions in the mother to ensure a healthy, lengthy, robust progeny. Tall stilty mothers, without length of body, will produce puppies of like form, no matter to what sire they are sent. The number of whelps may be, as we before hinted, regulated by certain precautions, and where we find large litters prevalent in any kennel, we know the breeder, master, or huntsman to be deficient in this part of the business. The largest litter we remember consisted of seventeen, when we first commenced our career of M. F. H., with the assistance of an experienced kennel huntsman, who had been for many years under one of the cleverest breeders of his time. Yet this man, when thrown upon his own resources, made such sad mistakes in this matter, causing by his

ignorance or want of due attention, sometimes half a dozen of our best brood-bitches to go without whelps, and others to be half killed by over-production, that we never trusted him again after the second season of his probation. A litter, to be good and strong, ought not to exceed seven or eight; and four or five are sufficient for the mother to rear.

As to size and height, whelps generally follow their parents, unless forced by high feeding to greater growth, or made diminutive from want of sufficient nutrition. Air, exercise, and judicious feeding upon food as much as possible devoid of heating properties, are indispensable to the dams in a state of gestation. When half their time is expired, they should be let run at large during the day, with a smaller kennel to themselves at night, until within a few days of their confinement. A paddock ought then to be ready for their reception, about an acre in extent, enclosed on all sides, and large oblong wooden boxes placed therein, in shape like the usual dog-houses, resting upon low wooden or iron wheels, with one side to open with hinges, which can be let down to clean the box thoroughly out, and a hanging door in the front, dependent upon a pivot above, through which, by a slight push, the bitch may obtain egress or ingress to her whelps—the use of this movable door being to exclude rain, sleet, and snow in bad weather. In large kennels, a regular shed is provided for them and their whelps, which, to those who can afford to make it, is far pre-

ferable; but for subscription masters—too often birds of passage from one country to another—the boxes are cheapest in the end, being easily removed to any desirable spot, and transferable by waggon and railway from one locality to another; and for greater lightness, the roof may be a mere frame, covered with felt or oil-cloth. In place of such boxes—which are rather expensive articles—two thatched hurdles, joined together at the top, with boards underneath, will answer the purpose; and a good bedding of clean dry straw when the whelps are a few days old. At the time of parturition, the bedding must be rather scanty, lest the whelps, when so very young and helpless, should be buried under it and overlaid by their mother.

We plead no excuse for entering into these minutiæ, apparently so trifling, since from neglect of such precautions, we have too often seen direful results follow. In large establishments, foxhound bitches have generally—save where the huntsman has very long ears and a shallow knowledge-box—the privilege of breathing the fresh air of heaven, and plenty of walking exercise to boot. There are men who, with all these advantages, will still coop them up in the kennel, until mother and offspring die together from utter neglect; but there are minor establishments, conducted by subscription, where, from local situation and want of range, the master is so hampered and circumvented, that he cannot breed his own entry—he has no scope for doing so, not owning, perhaps; an acre of land in the county. How can he

expect farmers, or even cottagers, will put up with the raking and scouring of their fields and premises? and loth to say, a foxhound mother with a litter a month old is somewhat shark-like as to voracity, not being very particular whether she snaps up a young lamb out of the farmer's fold, or steals a leg of mutton from the shop of the village butcher. But then you must remember such depredations are not committed for the gratification of their own appetites, but from the natural instinct to supply the wants of their progeny, when requiring stronger aliment than their mother can afford. From improper food, or injudicious treatment, the mother's milk often loses its nutritive qualities, and the juices of her body, if corrupt, are imparted to her whelps. For a month previous to her confinement, she should be fed sparingly on flesh, and a small quantity of well-boiled mangel-wurzel or cabbage, mixed with the oatmeal pudding. In using the former vegetable, great caution is at first necessary, in consequence of its laxative properties; but when accustomed to it, I have never found it disagree with hounds. If, from too long confinement in kennel, or want of air and exercise, those in whelp show symptoms of heat of body, by eruptions breaking out on the skin, they ought to be dressed with a little sulphur and rape-oil, mixed as thick as cream, ten days at least before whelping, and a teaspoonful of sulphur and cream of tartar given to them twice a week. In cutaneous diseases, we have found the following recipe very efficacious:—

Sulphur 1 oz.; lime 2 ozs.; water 1½ pint. Boil for an hour, till reduced to a pint; pour off clear. To be applied with a sponge twice a day.

When the skin is very irritable, we have used also glycerine, which has a very soothing effect. Both these applications, after being rubbed in by hand for two days following, require washing off the third day with warm water and soft soap, and the skin of the hound well dried with a clean cloth. As a general dressing for the pack, these remedies are too expensive, but in individual cases, and particularly for those in whelp, they are both safe and efficacious. Mercurial compounds never ought to be employed as a dressing at any time, except only in very obstinate red mange.

To ensure healthy whelps, the mothers must, of course, be in a healthy state, and upon that depends, more than many are apt to imagine, the well-being of the offspring. Scurfy, pot-bellied puppies afford unmistakable evidence of great neglect in this respect. When anxious to preserve the whole litter of a favourite dam, and you have a foster-mother ready to receive some of them, the precaution should be taken of gently rubbing the puppies taken away from the former with those of the latter, holding one in each hand face to face, and stomach to stomach, by which process the smell of the one will be imparted to the other. Young mothers are generally captious and snappish, and it is better to lure them from their box or den whilst this exchange is being made; the feeder should hold and

caress them the while, with their faces turned from the huntsman. We have read of the fury of the bear when robbed of her cubs, but the fury of a foxhound mother is not to be despised under such circumstances, however quiet and obedient in the kennel at other times; and if she discovers the fraud imposed upon her, the strange whelp will be sacrificed. A slight dose of Epsom salts, or a tablespoonful of castor-oil, should be given after delivery; and she should be fed upon thin oatmeal porridge, mixed with milk, if procurable, or sheep's-head broth in place of boiled horse-flesh, for the first three or four days. In many large foxhunting establishments, new milk is allowed for the use of the puppies in the spring of the year, as soon as they are able to lap, and, when stronger, mixed with oatmeal. Whey is a most excellent thing, twice a week for the mother when suckling, and acts most beneficially upon the whelps also.

CHAPTER IV.

Operations to be performed on foxhound whelps—Long and short sterns—Vixen foxes and their cubs—A wily mamma—Playing a game of hide-and-seek with conies—How to destroy worms and parasites in puppies—Healing ointment for burns and scalds—Blistering after firing cruel and unnecessary—Hothouse plants and forced meat.

THE first operation to be performed on foxhound puppies is the severance of the dew-claws by a sharp pair of scissors, for the healing of which the mother's tongue will suffice to make a perfect cure. An inch of the tail is also generally cut off when the whelps are three or four days old; but both operations should not be performed at the same time. It was an old custom, and a very silly one in our opinion, to twist the end of the puppy's tail round between your thumb and forefinger, the nail of the former being pressed so sharply as to sever the joint, and then to draw out the sinews or ligaments attached to it, and by so doing it was supposed the loins of the whelp would be strengthened. Why or wherefore, requires something more than mere assertion. Some men fancy long sterns—others short ones. The objection to the first is,

that where woodlands abound, the tips of their sterns or tails are whipped quite bare of hair by covert work, and present not only an unseemly but mangy appearance: hence the desirability of shortening sail or taii. We do not apprehend that the strength of any animal, save the kangaroo, lies in its tail; and Americans do say that this part of kangaroo meat is far superior to rump steaks or ox-tail soup. Never having partaken of this delicacy, we are not in a position to contravene such an opinion. Lambs'-tail pie is not bad to those who like such things, and puppies' tails are considered great delicacies by aristocratic Chinamen. As lambs' tails, however, are not cut off solely on account of their supplying savoury meat to epicurean palates, but for a widely different purpose,—to prevent their being draggled through dirty fallows, and thereby raising a hotbed for maggot flies to deposit their ova,—so we consider very long sterns to foxhounds objectionable.

As soon as the whelps begin to feed themselves, the mother should be shut up for an hour or two after she is fed, or by a natural instinct she will cast up her food to her whelps. All young animals, as well as birds, require frequent feeding—a little at a time and often—three times at least during the day,—morning, mid-day, and evening. Some whelps are more greedy than others, but none should be allowed to feed to distension. Gorging them with a quantity of food is productive of much mischief. In their natural state, animals and birds are generally free from those diseases which are

induced from their departure, in a domesticated state, from the laws of nature. We do not hear that the cubs of lions and tigers, bears, wolves and foxes, are subject to those most prevalent maladies amongst the canine species—mange and distemper —simply because their supply of food, although very limited, is of the most nutritious quality. Our acquaintance with the habits of tigers and lions in their natural state is very much on a par with the numerous companies springing up every day—limited; but we know something of the fox and dog kind.

In a state of nature, wild dogs, as well as wild foxes, subsist on animal food entirely, which requires a considerable time for digestion; and the quantity at any time obtained rarely exceeds their requirements. What is a rabbit or leveret divided amongst five or six hungry cubs, which have not tasted food since the previous night? as the dog-fox and vixen seldom seek their prey during the day, and their cubs do not venture forth from the bowels of the earth until long after the last glimmering light of the sun has subsided into the far west. When the buzzing sound of the cockchafer or black-beetle proclaims the advent of night, then, and not till then, do the young foxes quit their dens to catch these fleeting objects, as they fall against the trees or bushes by which they are surrounded, whilst their mammas and papas are out on more substantial foraging. But then rabbits and hares are not always so easily brought to hand or mouth—requiring, like some young ladies, a deal

of coquetting before they are handled. We have watched night by night, and year by year, for many years, the habits and practices of foxes and their cubs, and we have been much amused by the apparent *nonchalance* of an old vixen when passing through a rabbit warren, as if she did not entertain the most remote idea of doing violence to their feelings. The old rabbits stamped upon the ground, as a warning signal to the juveniles, which, seeming to understand the meaning of the notice, sat erect upon their hind-legs, watching the approach of the enemy. The old vixen, knowing the hopelessness of the pursuit under such circumstances, with burrows close at hand into which the whole colony of conies might disappear in a moment, strolled leisurely through the host, without even a bow or nod of her head, until she saw a couple of silly young rabbits, which had gone rather too far from home, scampering away into a thorn-bush for protection. "I have them," muttered the old crafty one, and rushing down directly to the bush with a short bark, the rabbits were so frightened at the onslaught that they fled from their shelter out on the opposite side, still farther from their burrows, and Mrs. Charley Fox snapped one up in a trice, giving him a pinch in the ribs with her incisors, which left him helpless on the ground; in a second she dashed round the bush again and tripped up the heels of the other delinquent, ere he had gone half way up the hill towards his burrow. We shall perhaps have an opportunity at a future time to write somewhat more about foxes and their habits, but now we

will return from this digression to the subject more immediately under our consideration.

In an artificial state, where the supply of food is regular at certain intervals, it is obvious that there being no craving from absolute hunger, the quantity should be moderate. And there is another consideration which huntsmen lose sight of—how will whelps fare when sent out to their walks in the country at farm-houses? Take their chance of getting what the calves leave at the bottom of the pail, or share the meal of whey with the pigs in the yard. Whelps, when young, are very subject to worms, which may be removed at this early period by a dessertspoonful of linseed oil, given fasting for two mornings following, an hour at least before they are fed; and if this does not expel them, a very small quantity of turpentine may be added. Rape-oil, thickened with yellow sulphur, will also suffice to destroy the little white lice by which puppies are worried when a month or six weeks old. Unless properly treated as to diet and clean bedding, which requires changing every third day, eruptions will soon appear on the skin—to remove which alteratives must be used. For the first, a teaspoonful of sulphur and cream of tartar, in equal quantities, given alternate evenings for a week, will prove sufficient, and a light dressing of rape oil and sulphur, as above mentioned.

When two months old, whelps may be sent out to those quarters where they are sure to be taken good account of; but, as a general rule, perhaps it is safer to keep them another month in the paddock,

by which time they will be stronger to meet the rough usage too often awaiting them. Previously, however, to their leaving the kennel, another operation must be undergone—not less painful because necessary in all large foxhunting establishments—branding one side with the initial letter of the master. To avoid causing more suffering to the whelp than absolutely unavoidable, we give the *modus operandi* adopted by ourselves:—Lay the whelp on his left side, one man holding his head and fore-legs, another the hind ones. Cut off sufficient hair on the round ribs with a sharp pair of scissors, having first placed the brand in the mouth of the boiler's grate; and when sufficiently heated to mark the skin, apply it quickly for a second with the right hand, having some fresh lard in the left to put on the scar as soon as the iron is removed. A more healing ointment, and better for blisters, burns, or scalds, is made as follows:—

Precipitated chalk 1 oz.; lard 4 oz.; melt the lard and stir in the chalk.

I have known some ignorant huntsmen—ignorant we mean of the result to be produced by this branding—apply the iron red-hot, by which not only is so much additional punishment inflicted on the unfortunate whelp, but the desired object is frustrated by extensive excoriation obliterating the outline of the mark, from excessive suppuration, just as we see the legs of a horse mutilated by a stupid farrier. There is another punishment added to this generally by country practitioners—a blister being directly applied to the smarting

sores, for the purpose, as they gravely assert, of drawing out the heat; and yet there are hundreds—we may say thousands—of well-educated owners of horses who tamely submit to the opinions of these people, without consulting their own common sense as to the cruelty and thorough absurdity of such a barbarous practice. It makes our blood boil to see the most useful of all our domestic animals left to the tender mercies of these professors of the veterinary science in this enlightened age, by which term we suppose is meant, that people are more widely awake to their own interests than in any previous one since the Deluge. We are really surprised to find a custom so revolting still in force, and we account for its continuance, not because of its utility to master or horse, but for the benefit of the farrier's account. What would any clever surgeon prescribe for a severe burn in the human flesh? The very opposite in its effects to blister—ointment; they do not add fuel to fire to extinguish it. The only use of firing is to create a perpetual ligature around and over the muscles and tendons which have given way, or are likely to fail from their insufficient strength to support extraneous demands upon them. The sinews of spider-legged young horses must give way under too great weight in the saddle; and even those of well-formed muscular animals are sorely tried by the absurd practice of calling upon four-year-olds to do badly that which at six years old they would do well. There is a restless impatience of prudent delay in the present age—cravings

for hasty precocious productions in human beings as well as animals. The children of this generation are, apparently, wiser in their parents' estimation and their own than the children of a former one. Forced meat is the ruling passion, or rather folly, of the days we live in. Hothouse plants are all the rage. A four-year-old colt is expected to be a perfect hunter, and a bullock or sheep of two years to produce first-rate beef and mutton. We prate about our grandfathers having been very slow coaches, but they knew right well the difference between yearling and four-year-old mutton, and half-calf from beef. Verily, our grandfathers were not such fools as we are willing to fancy them.

CHAPTER V.

Unnecessary cruelty to animals condemned—Necessity of branding foxhound whelps—Homeward bound—Anecdote of a lady foxhound—Marvellous instinct—The Three Magpies on Hounslow Heath—Agreeable incidental adventures—Travelling in bygone days—The extra spur to footboys—Advantages of giving names to puppies before sent to their walks.

ANIMADVERSIONS will be made upon foxhunters decrying cruelty in others, who are accused of practising it themselves. The cruelties in hunting a fox have been described over and over again, until the subject has become threadbare. Foxes must be killed as well as other animals of prey, and we do not believe, were the proposition submitted to a committee of vulpines, whether they would prefer being trapped by keepers, or run the chance of being snapped by hounds, there would be a moment's hesitation in their choosing the latter alternative.

We are running wide of the mark, however, just now, from marking foxhound whelps to marking foxes; but we would gladly dispense with this cruel

operation, could any substitute be found. When whelps are sent out from their kennel in large numbers at three months old, they would scarcely be recognized, after seven or eight months' further growth, by huntsman or master, save for the litter-mark and brand, so great is the metamorphosis from puppyhood to doghood. Some prefer marking their hounds twice a year with a pair of scissors, cutting out the initial letter in the hair only, which might easily be obliterated by a dog-stealer; but an entered foxhound, knowing well the locality of his kennel, is rarely lost, and if caught up—no easy matter—would seize the first opportunity of regaining his liberty and returning home. The brand is of the greatest service when the whelps are at their quarters, from which they may either stray away or be abducted by trampers. When once entered the pack, of course the hunt-man knows every individual by other distinguishing marks or peculiarity of feature, as a shepherd of the largest flock knows one sheep from another.

As an instance of the extraordinary instinct in a foxhound which directs his way home, I may relate the following fact:—The late Mr. Elton, of Stapleton House, who for many years kept a pack of thorough-bred foxhounds of Lord Egremont's breed, conjointly with my father, to hunt both fox and hare, gave a hound which had bred a litter of whelps that year to a friend residing in Essex, but at that time staying with him. This hound was taken in his travelling chariot—the usual mode of locomotion in those days—from Bristol, right

through London and thirty miles beyond. On the second night after her arrival there, she escaped from the kennel, and no tidings of such a hound being heard of or seen in the neighbourhood could be gathered. Her new owner, after fruitless inquiries and researches, bethought himself, as almost a forlorn hope, of writing to her late master, telling him the day she absconded, when he was greatly surprised to learn that the hound had reached Stapleton on the fifth day after being missed from Essex. Knowing the instinct and sagacity of the canine race, this feat would not have appeared anything very wonderful, save for the hound threading her way through the labyrinths of the great metropolis. She would have taken cognizance of the various inns on the road where the carriage stopped to change horses, and where, most probably, she alighted with her new master to stretch her legs. The sign of a large red fox, with a goose in his mouth, could not fail to attract her attention. A White Horse might bring to her mind the old grey mare ridden by the huntsman. The Goat and Compasses —etymologically explained by "God encompasseth us"—a phrase and sign in common usage during that arch-liberator or arch-fiend's reign, Cromwell—would strike her as bearing some resemblance to deer which she had seen in a park near home. The Three Magpies, on Hounslow Heath, a very notorious posting-house in those times, were likely to have made some impression on her mind from these birds generally assisting hounds with their hoarse notes, when a fox is before them.

Thinking of this inn brings to our recollection an anecdote of this Mr. Elton, when travelling together with my father up to London. On stopping to change horses there, they were told by the landlord that a Captain Melluish—I believe this was the name—had been shot by a highwayman only the night before on the heath, and was then lying dead upstairs.

"It is late, gentlemen," Boniface urged, "and I strongly advise you not continuing your journey in this dark night."

"We must go on," Mr. Elton replied, "having made a very early engagement in London for to-morrow morning; so order out four horses, and tell your ostler to bring in here a small mahogany box he will find on the seat of the carriage. Now," said Elton to my father, "you watch that rascal's face whilst I am reloading the pistols; for report goes that he is connected with the highwaymen on this road."

The ostler, having placed the pistol-case on the table, was leaving the room, when Elton desired him to remain, and my father immediately detected a change in his countenance, betokening, as he imagined, a guilty conscience. The pistols having been reloaded and fresh primed, Elton, handing one brace to my father and pocketing the other, gave the empty case to the ostler to replace in the carriage. A few minutes after, the landlord announcing that the horses were ready, the two friends left the house, and Elton, before taking his seat, going up to the postilion on the wheel-horses, said, loud

enough for the other to hear, "Now, boys! when you reach the spot where the unfortunate captain met his death last night, pull up. Do you hear?" as no answer was returned.

"Yes, sir."

"Go on, then, and mind you don't stop before, or," he said, showing his pistol, "this bull-dog"—a slang name for pistol in those days—"will bite as well as bark."

There was also a peculiar expression in Mr. Elton's eyes, suggestive of great resolution, which none could mistake, and the post-boy guessed the real character of the gentleman sitting behind him, with the window down, without daring to take a second look at him. When reaching the place—a lonely one, about two miles distant from the Three Magpies—the postilions obeyed their orders by pulling up.

"Now," said Elton to the man nearest to him, "whistle!—louder!—that's too low." A stronger note followed; again and again it was repeated.

"Shout!" cried Elton. This was obeyed, and the echoes joined with the moaning winds. For some ten minutes they remained stationary on the spot, when Mr. Elton, placing his pistol on the window-sill, with the muzzle just opposite the postilion's back, said, "Go on now, as fast as you can; and mind, the very instant you stop again, for anybody or anything, save a turnpike-gate, before reaching London, this bullet goes through your heart."

I have heard my father declare that he had

never travelled over those ten miles at such a pace before.

We must now return to the transit of foxhound whelps from the kennel to their country quarters, which is generally effected by a dog-cart; not the sort of vehicle so called in these times, but a veritable dog or puppy-cart, constructed solely for their accommodation, and resembling the van now in use to convey hounds to the place of meeting. There is one great advantage in giving names to whelps when first sent out, irrespective of the absurd misnomers by which they are likely to be christened at their walks—that when returned to the kennel a great deal of trouble will be saved to the huntsman and feeder, and a vast amount of discomfort to the hounds. A dog which knows his name, even when transferred from one master to another, becomes sooner reconciled to his new owner from being thus familiarly spoken to, and therefore we advise the adoption of this practice for all foxhound whelps, as well as any other whelps sent from home. In their new quarters there is generally a great diversity of treatment, save where their protectors for the time happen to be tenants of the master. In that case they will be carefully tended and well provided for; but when walks are procured through the interest of friends or subscribers, there being no connecting link with the master, the chances are all against these whelps figuring in the next entry. Genuine foxhunting farmers are the men, above all others, to whom we can confi-

dently entrust the young hopes of the family ; since, from love of the sport, as well as from the pride of doing them well, hounds under their care are sure to come home rather above than under the standard. Those placed with butchers are generally too well fed, and from living so grossly suffer more severely from distemper. A wayside inn formerly afforded good accommodation for hounds, as well as man and horse, although the majority of these hostelries are now converted to other purposes.

CHAPTER VI.

Prizes for raising foxhounds—Good feeding and careful treatment requisite for development of form—The master's eye makes the *hound* fat—Objections to distant walks—The malpractices of puppy dogs—Home education not suitable—Return to kennel—First draft—Number put forward—A day on the flags—Choice of entry—Room for improvement—The gentler sex take the lead—Pytchley run of '66, and the Waterloo hero—Long days and long runs of "auld lang syne"—A late draw—The white horse in a dark night—Sensational visit to an old lady's domicile—A long ride home.

THE practice adopted by ourselves many years ago of giving prizes to the rearers of the finest young hounds, has been generally followed, producing nearly the same effect as prizes awarded to cattle, sheep, and pigs, at agricultural meetings; and it frequently happens that a successful exhibitor of the best animal of his own breeding carries away also the silver tankard for the cleverest foxhound of his own feeding. When the master or his huntsman has exercised good judgment in producing whelps, which he has reason to think ought to turn out clever from the fair proportions of sire and dam, the full development of form depends, in a very great measure, upon their treatment in the most growing state of their existence, from three

to ten months old; and if neglected during that period, or irregularly fed—overcrammed at one time and starved at another—their master's care and trouble will have been expended to little purpose.

Where whelps are sent out to very distant walks, some forty or fifty miles from kennel, where they are far removed from the supervision of master and man, it is no uncommon thing for them to meet with rough usage and coarser fare during the chief part of their sojourn there; but as the time approaches for their return, they are then fatted up for the occasion, to make a fair show in the kennel; and this is a trick of which tenants at a distance are too often guilty. Perhaps we ought not to lay this charge exactly to themselves, but their *better halves*—and, in truth, at farm-houses generally, "the grey mare is the better horse." The master is obliged to be in the field, from sunrise to sunset, either superintending labourers, or himself working according to his status, whilst the missus is engaged in her household duties—making butter or cheese, feeding young ducks and chickens, &c.; and a mischievous foxhound puppy is more likely to interfere than assist her in these occupations. He will very probably be running off with a cheese-cloth or pat of butter, or running down a screaming young cockerel in the yard, for which and sundry other malpractices, in which puppy dogs are wont to indulge, he is almost sure to incur the dire displeasure of the missus—unless she is endowed with an angelic temper—and receive as his reward

monkey's allowance, in more senses than one. The experiment having been tried over and over again of rearing young hounds in the kennel, without success, masters are obliged to send them out, and run all risks. Two or three may be bred up at home, if allowed to run about the premises; but if confined within four walls, without daily exercise, their feet will bear a nearer resemblance to those of a duck than those of a cat. Moreover, home education is as objectionable for young foxhounds as it is for young gentlemen.

The best time for their return to the kennel is about the end of March, when the hunting season has nearly expired, and the huntsman has more leisure to bestow attention upon them. If hunting is continued through the next month, as happens in some large establishments, the care of the young hounds must devolve principally upon the feeder, except on non-hunting days. The best plan is to have all brought home about the same time, and to make your first draft directly, sending the others away before the distemper breaks out among the lot. More room will thus be afforded to those selected for the entry, and consequently less dread from virulent disease, since from overcrowded lodging-houses this scourge of the canine race assumes a most pestilential character. It is far better, therefore, to send away at once those young hounds not likely to suit your purpose, that more room and better attendance may be given to the chosen few, than keep the whole until the distemper has been overcome. In the first case, of course,

every master will put forward several couples more than are required for the entry. In a two and occasional three day per week country, ten couples will be necessary, and a third more should be kept, and so in proportion to the magnitude of the establishment.

Seasons vary very much, some being more favourable to the growth of foxhound whelps as well as other animals; it is therefore advisable, when such occur, to avail ourselves of the opportunity by selecting as many young hounds as can be reasonably maintained, lest, a bad season following, the next year's entry prove deficient in quantity as well as quality. There is no more pleasing sight to a master's eye than a clever lot of young puppies just sent in from their walks; and certainly he has reason to be proud of his success, coupled with good luck, in his having so many returned to the kennel. Then comes the examination day, when a few select friends are invited—genuine foxhunters, who know every old hound in the pack, and observe their work in the field—to pass their opinions on the points of merit in the young ones. To the great majority of hunting men a day on the flags presents as many attractions as an old lady's tea-party—a dull, stupid affair, with a deal of gossip about pedigrees and proportions of hounds, in which they have no desire to take part. Few there are—very, very few—who take the well-being of the pack into consideration.

In choosing young hounds for the entry, we are not groping in the dark, as when they were

handled in early puppyhood; yet even now, at ten or eleven months of age, their form is not fully developed. Throughout the whole animal creation, including birds also, females attain their perfection of growth long before the males. Those young foxhounds which appear rather loosely strung together at this age, generally turn out the most powerful when twelve or fourteen months old. We prefer those which show room for improvement to others more closely knit together, in which no further improvement can take place. Short-bodied hounds set, as huntsmen say, very early, and these are selected or drafted without much deliberation. Lengthy ones require looking over more attentively, since, when of a late litter, there is an apparent deficiency of muscle behind the shoulders, and in the loins and hind quarters, which will fill up as they become matured in age. We do not regard a hound being rather throaty or coarse about the head, provided he has oblique shoulders, straight long fore-legs, standing clear of his body at the elbows, but not out of the perpendicular; with good ankles, and round, not exactly cat-like, feet —for such, although pretty to the eye, will not bear much wear and tear. Hunting men know that horses with upright pasterns and short hoofs are the most uncomfortable of all animals to ride anywhere, particularly in going to covert and in the field. Their action is a succession of jolts and jars, resembling a donkey's canter. In hound and horse there must be a certain length between the knee and foot, to enable them to travel easily to

themselves, or satisfactorily to their owners; but this longitude must be limited, or it is productive of weakness. So also as regards the foot—too great latitude denotes an animal better fitted for aquatics than gymnastics. A splayfooted hound may go along tolerably well in a moist country, and with moist weather, but his deficiencies will become manifest in a hilly or flinty one.

We must refer to the hackneyed motto, as the rule to be observed on these occasions—*medio tutissimus ibis*. A foxhound without sound understanding from head to foot will not pay for his porridge. The size of his head ought to be big enough to hold plenty of brains, and his feet strong enough to carry his knowledge-box, with the frame thereto belonging, to the end of a run more lengthy than the Pytchley, February 2nd, 1866. By the way, we have not the most remote wish or intention to speak or write in disparaging terms of this great run in the present era, like a certain "Greybeard," and we don't agree with him in thinking that "half a dozen Lancashire men on foot" would have performed the distance in about the same time. It may appear rather contradictory, when we are always lauding the speed of foxhounds in the present age, that a first-rate pack, in a first-rate country, the greater part being pasture, should take *three hours and forty-five minutes*, as stated in "Baily," to run over some twenty-six miles of ground—the pace, on an average, not exceeding six miles and a half an hour. But then allowance must be made for

sundry little checks which did occur, and always will occur in very long runs. At times hounds are checked entirely; at others, their speed is diminished by stained ground, a piece of fallows, a turnpike road, and swinging round when the fox is headed off his line, which, though not quite amounting to a check, causes a slight hesitation. Then we must bear in mind that bullfinches and heavy fences stop hounds as well as horses, and all these seconds and minutes so lost, when added together, make a considerable sum total. That the Pytchley was a right good run, and the fox one of the right sort, there can be no question; that the hounds did their work well, and the master rode gallantly throughout, is also equally apparent; and save for being chased by a sheep-dog, the war-whoop must have resounded over the carcase of the Waterloo hero.

Having been accustomed to long days and long runs, we see nothing very wonderful in this fox-chase, which reminds us of similar ones in days of "auld lang syne," many of which are recorded in my "Recollections of a Foxhunter." One day per week throughout the season our hounds had to do from fourteen to eighteen miles before drawing a covert. Now, fourteen miles to the place of meeting, and fourteen back again, at six miles an hour —our usual rate of travelling by road—would amount very nearly to the Pytchley run; and then we had an interlude of some twelve or fourteen miles for the finding and finishing off our fox. Upon these occasions the hounds got their suppers

between nine and ten o'clock P.M., and ourselves rarely any dinner at all, since we were too much outdone to relish overdone meat. As long, however, as there was a chance of killing our fox, however late found, we never thought of whipping-off the scent; and we have ridden, with Charles Treadwell as our pilot, upon a white horse, when we could see nothing else—barely the fences—until we wound him up, or ran him to ground. The adventures of one night in particular occur to our memory just now.

We had a good morning's work, killing our fox handsomely, after a good run, and the majority of our field went home perfectly satisfied. Two or three *funkers*, who had seen nothing of it, and came trotting in half an hour after the finish, in the most unconcerned manner asked "if the day were over."

"Oh! no," we replied, "it is only three o'clock, and if you will promise to ride after the hounds this time, we will find you another fox."

We ought not to have gratified these malcontents—enough being as good as a feast on days when hounds are a long way from home; but our monkey being up we trotted off to draw again, found very late, and had the run entirely to ourselves. The shades of night were fast falling, but the scent was good, and the hounds running hard over a vale country. Our business was to keep as near to them as possible—getting up to them on a half-beaten horse being no easy matter—our first whipper-in, Charles Treadwell (the second being

lost), on his grey, taking the lead, and we could hear him floundering through the heavy bullfinches with loud "come-ups" occasionally, and a cry of warning to ourselves, "Look out, master, there's a nasty ditch t'other side." Looking out being out of the question when we could barely see our horse's ears, as he had the best eyes we trusted all to his discretion, and thankful indeed did we feel when we saw the lamps of a town glimmering in the far distance, near which there was a strong head of earths. These, however, being closed, our fox, then thoroughly beaten like ourselves, got into a drain on the premises of an old lady, living on the outskirts of the town, from which it was impossible to dislodge him. The servants rushed out on hearing the row, with candles and lanterns, to offer their assistance, which we declined, and left him alone in his glory, having then just eighteen miles of road-work before us ere we could reach the kennels. This last run was eleven miles as the crow flies, with deviations at least four more, and the time one hour and thirty minutes.

We have not mentioned this day's work as anything very extraordinary in those times, such being of frequent occurrence; and we have had sometimes to feed our hounds at twelve o'clock at night, when unable to stop them in large woodlands more than twenty miles from home. Foxes were stouter then than now, having to travel much farther in search of food. Game preserving is antagonistic to our sport in two ways—first, foxes are and will be trapped by keepers; and, secondly, those which

elude the trap, becoming fat and lazy, fall an easy prey to hounds. None but old dogs, which have escaped their numerous enemies for three or four seasons, know much about the country eighteen miles from home; and as these are very few, runs of this length must of necessity be rather of rare occurrence.

CHAPTER VII.

Treatment of young hounds when brought home to kennel—Going out in couples—Jerusalem ponies to be especially avoided—Cur dogs—Cure for exuberant spirits—Deer parks and hare warrens—Distemper principiis obsta—Following the plough—Diet—Extraordinary case of distemper—Remedies and prescriptions.

THE first work to be done, or which ought to be done, with the young hounds selected for entry, is to put them in couples as soon as possible and have them out into the fresh air, if a few only at a time. In this matter we know huntsmen are generally very remiss, putting off the trouble with the couplings to a more convenient season, when they have more leisure; yet from this neglect the very worst kind of distemper is generated. The young hounds, when brought into kennel, are fed highly on plenty of meal and meat, the reverse of what their treatment ought to be, and, in addition, they are denied any opportunity of exercise save that of playing in the grass-yard attached to their lodging-house. This is precisely the same course pursued by ignorant grooms, in feeding their horses just alike whether they are in work or not; but in this case the animals under their care do get a certain

amount of air and exercise out of their stable or loose boxes—the hounds do not. Those who have ever paid a visit to a large kennel of foxhounds, however neatly kept, will require no refreshener to their memories that the air in and about its purlieus was the very reverse of refreshing. The lodging-rooms may be whitewashed two or three times, the doors well scrubbed and fresh painted, the benches scoured with soda, sand, and soft-soap before the next year's entry comes in; yet the *odora canum vis* remains, verifying the old Latin adage, *Quo semel est imbuta recens, servabit odorem testa diu.* The acid has entered into the flooring, and it is impossible to be entirely mopped out by whole hogsheads of water, like the taint of cider into the wood of a new cask.

Then there are the odoriferous breezes from the boiling-house ever mixing with and overpowering all other salubrious breezes. Old hounds, accustomed to this kind of atmosphere, appear not to be affected by it, like nurses in a sick chamber; but then it must be borne in mind that during the hunting season they have plenty of fresh air and exercise, and even after the season is over they are walked out two or three times a day, and generally go out with the huntsman and whippers-in for two or three hours before breakfast, or after, through parks or along by-roads, to prevent their quarrelling in the kennel from too great idleness. To huddle a lot of young hounds together into a close lodging-room at night, which have been bivouacking out in open sheds at their quarters, or, peradven-

ture, sleeping under a hay-mow or corn-stack through all weather, must strike any unprejudiced person as most likely to produce that result which masters and huntsmen are most anxious to steer clear of—distemper in its most virulent phase.

We know it is no very pleasant occupation, having a lot of young awkward animals, like raw recruits, pulling and hauling you about and getting between your legs, before they have been drilled into something like order, and taught to keep step with each other; yet as this must be done, sooner or later, the sooner this preliminary lesson has been gone through the better. To save a good deal of this pulling and hauling about, the couples may first be put on them in the green-yard, for an hour or two in the morning and afternoon; but they must never be left for a moment out of the feeder's or huntsman's sight, when so coupled, or accidents to life or limb may follow, from getting entangled with each other, and a valuable young hound may soon be choked or have his leg broken.

Another precaution is also necessary—that the collars are not too tightly buckled. Some huntsmen couple an old hound with a young one—a bad practice, since the old gentlemen or ladies, not relishing the idea of turning bear-leaders in their old age, vent their indignation upon their awkward yoke-fellows by biting or rolling them over. We prefer keeping the young ones by themselves, joining two of the same height and strength together, so that the pulling on both sides be about even. At first they will, of course, turn fractious or sulky,

like young horses when first harnessed, but the whip ought not to be used. A little coaxing and patting will do more to reconcile them to this treatment than whipcord, and after a few hours' drilling they will go tolerably well, and may be taken out by the huntsman and the whippers or assistants—one to precede by a short distance and the other to follow them, not too closely. Open ground, such as parks with deer, or large fields with cattle or sheep, must not be chosen as early training ground, since some might easily break away from their attendants on foot, and most serious consequences ensue. Let them be taken into some green lane or by-road, not too much used by horsemen, or walked about a home-paddock twice a day, until they become more tractable.

Of all animals to be avoided, as most maliciously disposed towards hounds, a donkey takes precedence. Colts and bullocks will wheel round them in a field rather with wonderment than any evil intention; but that brute of all brutes, a Jerusalem pony, comes at them directly with open mouth, and unless Jem or Jack is in advance, to check his onslaught, in amongst the lot he dashes, tooth and hoof, using his fore-legs like a boxer, and dealing his blows with savage ferocity upon the backs and limbs of the astonished pack, who are not permitted to resent the insult. Why a donkey should feel thus maliciously inclined towards hounds we are at a loss to conceive, since none of his kith or kin have ever been consigned to the boiling-house; yet, so great is their antipathy to the canine race. that we

would rather meet a bear in a green lane than a Balaam. We have often encountered the assaults of these brutes, or, rather, their attempts to force their way by Charles, whose heavy thong they appeared to think lightly of; and sometimes he was obliged to use the iron handle on their frontispiece, and fell them to the earth, to stop them in their mad career. At their walks in the country, young hounds have been accustomed to meet with—and chat with in their own dog language—sheep-dogs and cur-dogs of all descriptions, and it never entered into their imaginations then to act otherwise than courteously towards them; but as soon as they have become occupiers of their large house—the kennel—they appear instigated by a fell desire to shed the blood of their former companions. Should Shag or little Viper cross their path when out at exercise, it is a difficult matter to stop them from giving chase, and Jem's whipcord is called into play, with certain objurgations of "War cur-dog!" Full of young blood and high spirits, they are like a lot of schoolboys, ripe for any fun and mischief; and their nature prompting them to run something, they will have a fling at any living creature which comes within their view. There is a better cure for this rebellious outbreak than whipcord—exercise, and plenty of it. Too much they cannot have, and it is far wiser to work off their superfluities by this course than any other. The desire for running cur-dogs may be effectually checked by taking them through neighbouring villages, where they are generally seen in large numbers and of every variety;

then through deer-parks and hare and rabbit warrens, to accustom them to the sight of those animals they are not to pursue.

This exercising ought to commence on the third or fourth day after the young hounds are brought back to the kennel, and *before* they have shown symptoms of distemper. *Principiis obsta; sero medicina paratur*, is a Latin proverb which answers to our English one, "Prevention is better than cure," peculiarly applicable to the treatment of young hounds. At this most critical point of their existence, due preparation to meet this disease is almost equivalent to its cure, and this preparation consists in plenty of walking exercise and rather low diet. When inflammation is most to be dreaded, as in distemper, then every precaution should be taken to keep the body in a healthy state. We once cured a couple of deerhound puppies by walking them twice a day after a team at plough, and, save at the beginning, when the cough began, giving each a dose of emetic tartar. They required no other medicine, the fresh-turned earth possessing such healing and invigorating properties. We cannot claim this idea as an original one, since we have heard of medical men in former years prescribing the same remedy for consumptive patients—with this distinction only, that they were to ride instead of walk after the plough. If, in addition to this airing, our young hounds were fed upon whey in the morning, and porridge in the afternoon only, we should not hear so much about the ravages of distemper.

This disease appears to fall lightly, if at all, upon other numerous species of puppy dogs abounding in towns and country villages. They may get it and get rid of it for anything their owners care, so long as they are not troubled in the matter; and it is quite certain that hundreds and thousands pass through their uninteresting lives without having it at all. Distemper, Proteus-like, assumes a variety of forms, and in its different stages requires different treatment. Some huntsmen plume themselves upon possessing an infallible remedy for all cases. Others think high-feeding the most important, and beyond this give themselves little trouble, except, perhaps, administering a dose of salt and water as an emetic, when the cough begins. The most mild form of distemper very much resembles influenza in human beings, by a copious discharge from the nostrils and eyes, when the head appears the most affected part of the system; and in this case, after the use of evacuants, generous diet becomes necessary.

This disease is confined principally to the brain, back, and loins, so that we have known hounds to lie paralyzed upon their benches for days and weeks without the power of motion, and yet, with great care, they have weathered the storm and recovered. One extraordinary instance of this we well remember, when a young hound, being prostrated, regained the use of his limbs; but, strange to relate, one side of his head collapsed, the skin and flesh upon it withering away, and even the bone appeared to shrink below the level of the other side. Not-

withstanding this deformity in appearance, the hound lost none of his faculties, and seemed as sensible as before the attack. The old remedy in these cases was the simple application of tar, from the nose down to the tip of the tail; port wine and bark was also prescribed as a tonic, of which we suppose the feeder took his share—probably the largest. Patience and perseverance in such cases will be commensurate with the supposed value of the patient, and no pains or trouble can be said to be thrown away if the life of a very clever young hound can be saved. We have often seen twitchings of the limbs to remain after such visitations, and have kept hounds so affected, which, if not capable of very great exertions in the field, would, from their high breeding, do more in half a day than others would do in a whole one. Upon fleshy hounds the distemper falls with the greatest severity, in congestion of lungs and liver, in which cases bleeding at the very commencement may turn the tide—in fact, although the lancet has been seldom resorted to of late years by medical men, except in very critical cases, we may include such attacks in this category. In inflammatory subjects the loss of blood often prevents the loss of life, when taken in time—if too late, the animal dies from the operation. Blistering ointment ought also to be applied and rubbed in over the seat of the disease, and we know of none more efficacious than tartar emetic and lard, one drachm of the former mixed with seven of the latter. Calomel and James's powders, when lungs and liver are affected, are the chief

medicines to be given, with low diet and warm lodging ; from three to four grains of the former in obstructions of the liver, and a tablespoonful of castor-oil in the morning. James's powders act both as an alterative and a sudorific, and we have cured many hounds by means of this medicine, in obstinate cough giving small doses repeatedly ; but it is a dangerous remedy in the hands of a careless person. Distemper also shows itself in fits, from which recovery is very doubtful ; and the yellows, so called by huntsmen, or properly jaundice, generally proves fatal, unless active remedies are applied on its first appearance.

CHAPTER VIII.

Rounding the entry—Reasons for so doing—Quickest mode of performing it—Varieties of foxhounds and crosses—Stud-books of kennels—Oldest establishments—The chase of wolf, boar, and stag in ancient times—Dogs used for this purpose—Their size and strength—Depredations of wolves in the reign of Athelstan—Bloodhound cross in North Warwickshire kennels—Our own experiment in this cross—Black-and-tan pack in the west of Ireland.

WHEN the entry has thoroughly recovered its health and strength, and all vestiges of the distemper have disappeared, then is the proper time for the last operation to which foxhound puppies are subjected, called rounding, or cutting off the ends of their ears, which to those not initiated into the mysteries of the *ars venatica* must appear an unnecessary act of cruelty, without some explanation of the why and wherefore such practices have prevailed in foxhound kennels, whilst their own brothers and sisters, drafted to hunt hares, are spared this bloody ordeal, before entering into active life. The fact is, that young foxhounds have to commence their work in large thickly-tangled woodlands, from which they are rarely permitted to emerge during the cub-hunting season; consequently the tops of

their ears, if not cut short, would be sadly torn by briars and thorns, causing continual sores and ulcerations, and thereby daily pain. Rounding, although a painful operation, saves foxhounds from a great deal of suffering in after life, and without it they would not work as they ought to do, through gorse-brakes and blackthorns, with any degree of comfort. We have heard the old saying, "as sulky as a bear with a sore ear," and conclude that hounds similarly afflicted would not feel particularly anxious to increase their sores by extra scratchings through coverts—although no animal of the canine species possesses more resolution and courage than a well-bred foxhound.

Harriers, on the contrary, having as a general rule to find and pursue their game in the open fields, do not necessarily require any abridgment to the natural length of their ears; and in bygone time pendulous appendages of this kind were considered great recommendations to hare-hunters. For the purpose of rounding, a block of hard-grained wood, about the length of the hound's head, with a smooth even surface, is required, upon which the ear is laid out, and with one blow of a wooden mallet on the handle of the half-circular iron, the operation is over, and the other side of the head turned round to complete the business. The assistance of two other men is required, one to hold the hound to the block, and the other behind to prevent his pulling back, whilst the huntsman performs the part of surgeon. By a quick eye, and ready, steady hand, the severance of

the two tips may be effected within one minute, and the hound led back in his couples to the lodging-room. There is a great difference in the width and length of foxhounds' ears; some are of such extent as to require excision all round, and others so narrow that the tips only come under the iron; and this distinction in the ear, as well as the size of the head, proves the two original species of hound, still retaining their characteristics through a variety of crosses, and after the lapse of many centuries.

The Northern hound was distinguished from the Western and Southern by greater size, larger head, deeper note, and finer nose, whereas the latter is represented by ancient chroniclers of sports and pastimes to have been more nimble of foot, lighter form, and lighter tongue, but not endowed with equal patience and perseverance, as his more stalwart competitor in the chase. Some sportsmen have gone the length of assuring us, that our finer-framed foxhounds of the present age owe that neatness of head, swanlike neck, depth of chest, and thinness of stern, to an original cross with greyhound blood. The greyhound shape is there, and moreover the greyhound tongue and the greyhound ear; but this cross must have been of ancient date, since for more than one hundred years pedigrees of foxhounds in the large breeding kennels, from which minor establishments throughout the kingdom are supplied, have been scrupulously and carefully registered in their stud-book. Moreover, we know that hunting qualifications were considered of the highest im-

portance by all masters and huntsmen of the old school.

Before the commencement of the last century, kennel management and genealogical records received little attention. We have had authentic information as to the time when three of the first foxhunting establishments had their commencement. The Duke of Beaufort's in 1753, antecedent to which staghounds, foxhounds, and harriers occupied the Badminton kennels. The Duke of Rutland's about the year 1768, and Lord Fitzwilliam's before 1765, when the celebrated pack of Mr. Child was transferred to the Milton kennels, with their huntsman William Deane, who hunted them thirty-five years. It is not probable that in these great kennels such an attempt at improvement, or rather alteration, has been made since their establishment, by an infusion of greyhound blood; but that such a cross had been tried many years previously is not so improbable.

In ancient times the chase of wolf, boar, and stag occupied the attention of our Anglo-Saxon and Norman ancestors, and for the purpose of dislodging them from their sylvan fastnesses, a variety of dogs were used—bloodhounds, rough greyhounds, and mastiffs; and most probably their hunting packs contained a mixture of these three breeds—to find and hunt them from their harbour in the woods, from which, when forced to fly, they were chased by the deerhounds, and the hunters mounted on horses trained for the purpose, carrying cross-bows and spears. Wolf and boar hunting differed as

widely as the poles are asunder to modern fox-hunting, being productive of fearful accidents to man, horse, and hound. We know by experience that the bite of a fox is far from being agreeable, but the rent from a boar's tusk in your leg must have been something to remember for a very long time after. We may occasionally stake our horses, but the tusks of an infuriated hirsute old pig inflicted injuries of a more deadly character, since he was not rolled over by the pack in the unceremonious manner befalling poor Charles James. Boars fought desperately when brought to bay, and half a dozen spear-heads sticking in their hides added only to their fury, until a powerful horseman, riding up to close quarters, with hand over head, sent his shaft clean through the animal's body.

We are told that wolves were so numerous in Yorkshire during the reign of Athelstan the Saxon, that a kind of fort was erected at Hixton, in that county, to protect travellers from their attacks; and their depredations were carried on to such an extent that lands were leased out on payment of so many wolves' heads, instead of money. In the more thickly inhabited counties, such high premiums were given for the destruction of these marauders, that they very soon became nearly extinct; but in Scotland, and the northern counties, more thinly populated, and abounding in rough moor and woodlands, their extirpation was more gradual, and chiefly effected by means of the chase. Now there can be very little doubt that the dogs used

for this purpose, and from which our present race of foxhounds is descended, were a cross between the deerhound and bloodhound—one selected as possessing the highest courage and speed, and the other gifted with the keenest power of scent. The original cross must have been of great size and strength, averaging from thirty to thirty-six inches in height, with corresponding bone and muscle, and equal to contend singly with their foe. How long packs of this kind were in use, we have no means of ascertaining; but as in the reign of Edward I. wolves were very numerous, we must suppose these hounds found still sufficient occupation; and when their more savage game ceased from the land, their services were required for hunting stag, fox, and hare. To satisfy ourselves on this point—the origin of our present foxhounds—we tried, many years ago, the experiment of a cross between one and a greyhound, and the result verified our expectations. Four whelps were produced, three resembling their mother, the greyhound, in depth of chest and length of head, neck, and frame—and the other almost the image of his father, with wider head, and greater width of chest, possessing also a capital nose. The dogs were used for hunting deer, and would draw covert, find their game, and hunt him afterwards, as long as the scent held good—but we cannot say they showed much disposition to work upon a bad one. By persevering in the foxhound strain, there would have been great improvement in their hunting qualities.

We remember seeing in the North Warwickshire

kennels, some few years ago, a cross between the foxhound and bloodhound—by their then master, Mr. Baker—upon which Peter Collison, now huntsman to the Cheshire, pinned his faith, as the most efficient hounds in the pack, quite equal in speed and quickness to any others, and showing better nose than the majority. We quite agree with all masters and sticklers for purity of blood, in what we now call thorough-bred foxhounds, that they *can* and *will* hunt, if left to themselves, a very cold scent; and we are free to confess that they owe this property to their original bloodhound strain; and, as we have before remarked, that that strain is exhibited in the difference of shape of head, and length of ear peculiar to the bloodhound —others, again, going back to the father's side, the deerhound, in thinness of head, smallness of ear, and depth of chest. *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* In proof of this, we may state that some thirty years ago we received, in an unentered draft from the late Sir Thomas Mostyn's kennel, who then hunted the Bicester country, a hound which he called Yarico, resembling a bloodhound in every particular, as to colour, shape, and other points; and on consulting Tom Wingfield, the huntsman, he assured us no such blood had ever been introduced within his recollection into their kennel.

Having always a partiality for large hounds, and being acquainted with the masters as well as huntsmen of the most celebrated packs in those times, we had opportunities of picking up occasionally

an unentered hound or two, of too large dimensions for the generality of kennels—cropping out from the usual standard. Some very large though rather coarse hounds about the head and neck we got from the late Lord Lonsdale, then hunting part of Leicestershire with a pack more conspicuous for their hunting capabilities than for symmetry of form. From the Fitzwilliam kennel we also got hounds of equal size and power, but of better form. One in particular we well remember, named Falstaff, of unmistakable bloodhound descent, showing all the characteristics, even to the coat upon his back. From the Badminton kennels also we had, not very many years ago, a young hound sent us by Will Long, standing twenty-eight inches, which I named Marmion. It showed signs on the other side—the deerhound cross—as to colour, and having a narrow head, long neck, and immensely deep chest, with ears so exceedingly fine that the tips only required to be severed by the rounding-iron.

Again, from the late Lord Ducie we had a young hound of great size, a veritable bloodhound in appearance, as to shape and colour, which we called Druid. Mr. Ward's hounds—afterwards our own—were notorious for size and power, the dark tanned being the largest and coarsest, but the best hunters. From these and other like observations which have come under our notice, we have no doubt in our own mind as to the originals from which our present foxhounds are descended. The late Sir Wheeler Cuffe, a celebrated sportsman, who

had hunted with the great Mr. Meynell, informed us that in the west of Ireland there was a pack of hounds, used for the purpose of hunting fox and hare, all of one colour—black-and-tan—of great size, and which had been kept up in that country from time immemorial—probably ever since the last wolf-hunt.

CHAPTER IX.

Training for cub-hunting—The *unde derivatur* of hound language—Its use and abuse—Cheerfulness and good-humour in man productive of cheerful obedience in animals—Whey an excellent alterative—Our old kennel huntsman—Bondsman in disgrace—Whips not to be used in kennel—Visit of a Dutchman—His dread of foxhounds—A young lady's new waltzing partner—Her parting kiss—The late J. Starkey, of Spye Park.

When the young hounds have so far recovered from the effects of the rounding-iron—which operation ought to be performed on a cold day—that their ears are beginning to heal, exercise may be resumed, at first to a moderate extent, since from the loss of blood they will not be in a fit state to undergo much fatigue. To facilitate the healing process, a simple remedy is at hand—the oil or fat skimmed from the copper, which may be applied by means of a feather to the sores of the ear. In recent wounds, a dog's tongue is said to possess very curative properties; and as young foxhounds cannot lick their own ears, we have often noticed their assiduous attentions to each other in performing that office, with a view, we suppose, to stopping the effusion of blood; but in our opinion it appeared only to have the contrary effect—in

fact, no styptic can be applied at this moment, from their constantly shaking their ears; and a powerful young foxhound, when loosed from the muzzle and couples, smarting from pain, is not so easily handled as a lady's lap-dog. The ladies will squeak a little when denuded of part of these graceful appendages, but the dog-hounds express their disapprobation of such unceremonious usage by the rising of the bristles, angry growls, and efforts to fight—this species of auricular confession being the reverse of agreeable to Tom the feeder, who has to perform the part of father confessor on the occasion, by placing his hands on the hound's head, which is then taken back to the extra lodging-room, well littered down with straw, on benches and floor also. With this last act, the stage of puppyhood may be said to terminate.

When the entry have thoroughly regained their health and spirits, the business of foxhound life commences, by training for cub-hunting. Until within a month of their being first taken to the woodlands, the young entry will do far better by themselves in their airing and exercise, during which, if properly treated, they ought to become as handy and obedient to their huntsman as old hounds. Professionals *will* adhere to the old nomenclature of language, which for generations has been used for foxhounds, as if intelligible and natural to them as whooping to owls. The *unde derivatur* of these curious terms would puzzle far cleverer heads than that of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D. Pronounced they may be, and

are, even by amateurs, but they are hardly transferable to paper. Hounds, however, being great *linguists*, readily comprehend the meaning of the language in which they are addressed, whether it be English, French, or that most unintelligible of all tongues—Welsh. As to the words used, whether classical, poetical, or dramatical, or the reverse of all these, it matters not one tittle, provided the hounds themselves understand the meaning in which they are used; all that is required of them being to answer to their names, come back when called, turn here and there, as directed by their huntsman. The professionals, however, generally have a dull monotonous way of speaking to and treating hounds when called, which produces the contrary effect of willing obedience—we mean, repeating their names a dozen times over, when wishing to draw them from their kennel, at the same time that the whipper-in is instructed to force them up to the huntsman. This we maintain is a very silly, slip-slop way of proceeding. For our own part, we never allowed the interference of a whipper-in in the kennel, neither did we ever draw a hound by means of a whip, fully appreciating their dislike to whipcord. When drawing or feeding hounds, the only thing ever in our hands was a thin hazel twig, not bigger than our little finger, or a silk handkerchief taken from our pocket. Then it must be borne in mind that these hounds were affectionately attached to their master as a pet spaniel to his mistress—and all our favourites had nicknames in addition to their legitimate ones,

to which they would respond with the greatest alacrity. The general conduct of huntsmen to their dependants is too formal and methodical, with a great lack of that cheerfulness, vivacity, and good humour, without which we must fail to gain the affections of all created animals, from woman downwards. The services of whippers-in would be rarely needed, were huntsmen to adopt the method we recommend.

The process of preparing the young entry must be similar to that of training a thorough-bred horse for racing, as well as a hunter for the field—gradual walking, trotting, and at last galloping; and as the heat of summer increases—when we have anything like summer weather—the exercise must commence at a very early hour in the morning, say four or five o'clock, and to return home in time for the huntsman's breakfast and their own, since young hounds at this season of the year require feeding twice a day—about nine o'clock in the morning, and five in the afternoon. Our general practice was also to give the old hounds a little thin lap about the same hour, and their supper in the evening, which had the effect of keeping them quiet during the night. Twice a week during vacation time, we took them to a farm-house for whey, which contributed not a little to their health—in short, the work with hounds at this period is more troublesome than in the hunting season, to a huntsman who does his duty by them. From sunrise to sunset, there is always plenty to do—first with the young hounds before breakfast,

then with the old ones after it, in or out of kennel, according to the weather, until the servants' dinner hour; out with the young hounds again for a couple of hours after dinner, and on their return out with the old ones again, walking them about until eight o'clock in the evening.

In very hot weather, our old hounds were walking or lying about with the deer under the shade of the trees the greater part of the day, attended by the kennel huntsman only, no whipper-in being necessary to keep them in order. We were lying down one day with them around us, all fast asleep, when we were roused by some very shrill notes, and the braying of donkeys—two boys mounted on them having passed up the drive near to which we were lying, too near to be tolerated by our faithful guardians, who resented their intrusion by pulling the boys out of their saddles, greatly to their horror and consternation. A rate from their master—"let them alone"—saved the urchins from further fright—personal injury they had received none, although their jackets had been ruffled a little by this unceremonious dislodgment; for our big burly hounds, although naturally fierce and courageous, possessed great generosity of disposition.

During occasional absences from home, the care of the pack devolved upon an old kennel huntsman, who seemed as anxious about them as ourselves, and so attentive to their personal appearance, that during the holidays or summer months he carried a hairbrush and small comb in his pocket—perhaps the same used at his own toilette—with which he

might be seen under the shade of the trees, industriously smoothing down any rough hairs on the hounds' coats. Upon one occasion, when returning home, we found, to our surprise, a favourite hound chained up outside the kennel to one of the puppy-houses.

"Why," we asked, indignantly, "have you treated Bondsman in this manner?"

"Because, sir, he pulled me down in the kennel one day, amongst the other hounds; and but for the feeder running in to my rescue, I might have been torn to pieces."

"And broken you up like a fox, eh?" we added, with a laugh. "But now for the whole truth; you struck that hound with the whip when there was no occasion for it, and you ought to know by this time that our hounds won't put up with that from anybody, except on horseback."

"Well, sir, I ought not to have done it perhaps; but he was snarling and growling with Draco, and to stop a row, I gave him a cut on the back, and the next moment he sprang at me like a tiger, seized the collar of my coat, and had me down before I hardly knew what he was about."

"He gave you a clever back fall, that's all. Did he attempt to bite or worry you when down?"

"No, sir,—walked away, as Tom said, with his stern well up, looking as if nothing had happened; but then, sir, you know the other hounds might have taken advantage of me."

"Pshaw! let Bondsman loose directly."

"If you please, sir, I had rather not, for he has looked very savage at me ever since."

"Well, then, be off to the boiling-house for shelter, or I'll tell him to give you another floorer; and for the future remember to hang your whip up at the door before you enter the kennel."

We had many visitors at this period of the year, when time hung heavily on hand from the lack of sporting recreation in the country. Sometimes professionals, who entailed upon us a day upon the flags, to whom a show of foxhounds presented as great attractions as a flower-show to ladies. Masters of neighbouring establishments have here an opportunity of thoroughly examining the young entry, and seeing the sires and dams of those which particularly engage their attention, with a view to a cross with their own hounds, a privilege conceded to all brother masters, whether known or unknown, without fee or favour. Sometimes we were honoured by gentlemen of the vicinity bringing friends to see the lions, and on one occasion we remember a Dutchman coming over to see, what he had never seen in his life before, a pack of foxhounds. Having been introduced by a member of our hunt, we were proceeding to introduce him to the hounds, which being visible through the palings, and hearing my voice, rushed to the door to welcome our approach as usual.

"Ah! mine goot, sir," cried the alarmed Dutch-

man, clutching us by the arm, "pray do not open de door; me see quite well here de grand dog; dey bery fine animals, but so fierce!"

"Oh! no, not fierce," we said; "they only express their joy on seeing their master; they would not injure a child, so come with me."

"Oh! no, tank you, I get into de garden, whiles you go in;" and into the garden forthwith bolted the Dutchman by the side-door, fearing, we verily believe, they would devour him like a lot of lions. His friend tried in vain to disabuse him of his silly notions on this subject; and two ladies by whom they were accompanied laughed immoderately at his cowardice, essaying to shame him out of it by walking with us among them.

"Look here, Mr. Van Thyll," cried a lively young lady, pretending to beat one of the largest hounds on the head with her parasol, "are you afraid now?"

"Me do vara well outside de rail; dat dog know you."

"Look, you shall see him waltz with me now;" and taking a foot in each of her tiny hands, she raised him from the ground on his hind legs, and began walking him round and round, the hound seeming to enjoy the fun.

"There!" she cried, exultingly, "does he not keep step well?"

On his attempting, however, to lick her face, she released him from further gyrations, and bending over his head, said in a low voice, "Dear Archy, I

had rather have a kiss from you than——." We could not hear the remainder of the sentence, but easily guessed it.

"Confound that cur Fritz!" exclaimed his friend. "I couldn't have believed him such a coward! Now, girls, we must be going, so make your partner a curtsey, Fanny, or give him a kiss, as you please."

Our hounds were accustomed to ladies' society, which, perhaps, was one of the chief causes of their courtesy towards visitors; and from our great attention to cleanliness, a pin might be picked off the floor as bright as it fell.

Strange as it may appear, members of the hunt manifest very little interest in the well-being of the pack to which they ostensibly belong. If the sport is good, it is a matter of perfect indifference to them how it is effected; in short, they would not care a rap whether a bagman were turned out of a sack, or a wild fox from his kennel, provided they got what they go out for and nothing else—a run, as something to talk of. We considered ourselves fortunate in having one at least who understood the management and working of a pack of foxhounds—one who had profited by the instruction he had received and the lessons he had been taught by that renowned sportsman, John Warde, with whom he had hunted for many years previously to his joining our hunt: we allude to the late John Starkey, of Spye Park, Wilts, as enthusiastic a foxhunter as he proved himself to

be a stanch and constant friend. Men of his class and in his position have the power of doing much good and averting much evil. Their authority cannot be gainsaid by others in the field of far less experience, and little acquainted with the mysteries of the "noble science;" and every master knows how to appreciate the services of such a supporter in ticklish matters, with a ticklish scent.

CHAPTER X.

More remarks on training—Gradual increase of pace—Swimming through streams—No necessity for periodical dressings—Beckford's opinion at variance with our own—Clean wheat straw indispensable as litter—Vegetables during summer—Alteratives—Old oatmeal the staple food—Mode of preparation—Objections to barley—Iron boilers, not copper—Time for boiling—Good man-cook—French cuisine—"De gustibus non est disputandum"—À bas greaves.

In the last chapter we made some remarks on the training of the young hounds preparatory to the commencement of their work in the woodlands; and taking into consideration the season of the year when cub-hunting generally begins, from the first week in August to the first week in September, as the country may chance to be chiefly pasture or arable—which makes the difference of a month; considering also the hardness of the ground and heat of the weather at this period, it is evident that hounds ought to be in first-rate condition, with not an ounce of inside fat or superfluous flesh to meet the hard work in store for them. Two months at least will be required to prepare them for this purpose, by gradually increasing their exercise, both as to time and pace, until they can go for a couple of miles at a stretch, over downs,

with the horse at a hand gallop, without distress, and shut their mouths directly after being stopped. If no such open ground is within reasonable distance of the kennels, shorter bursts may be adopted, and longer trotting exercise.

Should there be a clear stream or river in the neighbourhood, an occasional swim through it will be of service in making the young hounds accustomed to water, as well as invigorating their frames. But there is a drawback to frequent bathing, when hounds have to travel through dusty roads to the river side, from the dust adhering to their coats, and thereby causing irritation to the skin, which we have known to break out into eruptions like mange. As to periodical dressings spring and autumn, for which huntsmen are generally such strong advocates, we shall merely observe, that where mange breaks out in any kennel, it is presumptive evidence of improper food, or neglect of cleanliness. When hounds are fed nearly the same all the year round, mange will appear from heat of body, or it may be induced by bad litter. Oat or barley straw will unquestionably cause great irritation, and ought never to be used as bedding, for which purpose clean, dry wheat straw ought solely to be employed, and that well shaken up every morning whilst the hounds are out of the kennel, and the benches thoroughly brushed with a stiff besom.

During the summer months, cabbages, young and tender, not old and tough, given twice a week in their food, will conduce much to the health of

the pack, and prove a saving of oatmeal, mangel-wurzel at that time being too hard and stringy, although the liquor from the roots is still good. The water in which cabbages or potatoes are boiled, particularly that from the latter vegetable, ought never to be given either to dogs or pigs; in fact the only method to dress potatoes, either for human beings or animals, is by a steaming apparatus. We tried the experiment one season of using potatoes thus cooked, but not answering our expectations, except as a relief to the meal bin, they were discontinued, and young nettle-tops and cabbages substituted in their stead. With these and occasional alteratives, sulphur and cream of tartar, Epsom salts, and regular exercise, hounds do not require dressing as a general practice. If our recollection serves us, Beckford expressed an opinion that "he supposed the oftener hounds were dressed the better they would look." We are obliged to differ with this great authority, and say, "We *know* the oftener hounds are dressed the *worse* they will look;" and from several other observations made by him, our impression is that he was a better man in the field than in the kennel. His feeder tells him that the best food for hounds is part barley and part oatmeal; but had he tried the experiment for a few months only, he would have made the discovery that good *old* oatmeal is the thing, and the only thing, to feed foxhounds with. No wonder that the use of barley meal entailed upon his pack frequent dressings.

Oats contain more nutritive and strengthening

properties than barley, and in the manufacture of oatmeal the husk is entirely separated from the grain, barley being ground down husk and corn together, which causes so much irritation to the stomach and intestines of dogs. We hear certainly of the Irish and Scotch oatmeal being superior to the English, and the reason is this: Oatmeal being the staple of our Sister Isle, more attention is paid to the cultivation of this grain, thus rendering it more palatable and digestible to the poorer classes in those parts of Her Majesty's dominions, who subsist principally upon this kind of farinaceous food. But there is another reason why a greater breadth of oats is sown in Scotland and Ireland. The soil and climate are more congenial to their growth than that of any other cereal, except rye, the use of which began to decline with the rule of the ancient Britons. Rye is still extensively cultivated in Germany, and not many years since the post-horses were fed chiefly on rye bread mixed with a portion of sand, to prevent ostlers and postilions appropriating it to themselves. The sweetest bread that can be made is composed of three parts of wheat flour and one of rye; but in the present age, adulteration of flour is carried on to such a villanous extent, wholesome bread is unattainable from any town baker. It appears that from the time of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, bakers generally have been guilty of great malpractices, and richly deserve to have their heads lifted up on gallows high as Haman's.

To guard against adulterated oatmeal, the coarsest

should be selected—almost whole grits, which, although requiring more labour in boiling, proves the most nutritious food. The manufacture of this meal is little understood in England, and less practised; yet the process is a very simple one. The oats, having been first dried on a kiln, are passed lightly through the mill to disengage the husks—then winnowed clean from all chaff and dust, and ground coarsely or fine, according to the demand. For foxhounds, this meal ought to be *twelve months* old before used; for, when new, we have found it to disagree with them, and not stand firm after boiling. There is great economy in having an old stock on hand, a practice generally adopted in all large hunting establishments. It goes much farther, and pays well for keeping. We had large bins, or rather wooden compartments, in our granary, into which the meal was trodden down by men, and then battened; and thus stored it would keep good for two years, if not wanted before.

In boiling, great attention is necessary that it does not catch at the bottom of the boiler, which ought to be of iron—not of copper or brass. We had a careless feeder once, who might have lost his life by negligence in this matter; the meal, from not being stirred, stuck to the bottom, causing the boiler to burst with a loud explosion, and throw the scalding pudding all over the boiling-house, which the feeder had just left. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," and unless well boiled for an hour at least, it will neither keep longer than a day, nor take the proper allowance of broth to

break it up. The coolers also must be thoroughly washed and scrubbed, and let dry before another lot of meal is emptied into them, or it will assuredly turn sour. When such precautions are requisite in preparing the hounds' food, we need scarcely remark that a good *man-cook* or feeder is of the next greatest importance to a good huntsman.

There is also considerable care necessary in cooking the *beef*, which ought not to be boiled to rags—a common trick with idle feeders, to save the trouble of chopping. In this state it is divested of all nourishing properties, and becomes indigestible—the answer to which is, the *broth* is all the better. Then we reply, "Throw away the rags."

Hounds and dogs generally have hitherto exercised a monopoly in horse-flesh, but it seems that our versatile neighbours over the Channel are beginning to dispute their ancient prerogative to this patent; and if the rinderpest continues its ravages in this country, it is not improbable that we may also be compelled to experiment upon kennel beef. That Monsieur Soyer or any other French artist in the culinary department could send up an entrée composed of horse-meat, so highly seasoned and flavoured as to form a dish resembling hashed venison, or any other hash, we do not pretend to question. Fortunately, being a plain feeder, we are exempted from such impositions upon our palate. Prejudice goes great lengths, but, dispassionately considered, we don't see any very valid reason why the flesh of a racehorse, which has gone too great lengths, by breaking down, or breaking his legs,

should not be as wholesome food as ox-beef. Both animals feed alike, although the horse does not chew the cud ; and we are assured by those who have tried the experiment that the meat of a young fat horse is quite as good as that of a stall-fed bullock—and so it may be, for all we can prove to the contrary. My father's feeder told us that he generally dined in the boiling-house, but being a man of Herculean strength in body and constitution, it would not have surprised us had he cooked a couple of young puppies for his breakfast, since old Tom's stomach would digest anything except the prong of the stirrer. *De gustibus non est disputandum*—but we suspect that our English eaters must undergo a wonderful change, and extraordinary pressure from without, before we shall deprive the kennel of its perquisites in horse-flesh.

Greaves are a miserable substitute—the most foul unwholesome stuff that can be given to dogs of any kind, and totally unfitted for foxhounds, in the season or out of season, being the refuse of butchers' shops, odds and ends of candles sold by servants as their perquisites, and any other articles containing fat, all of which being boiled up together, the sediment which remains, with the scum, is pressed into a hard cake, and sold for dogs' meat. Sheeps' trotters were formerly readily obtained, and the broth from them is equally nutritious—more so even than horse-flesh; the bones, of course, being picked out before mixing with the meat.

Enough has been written to show that to keep foxhounds in healthful condition, none but good

sound wholesome food should be given—coarse old Irish or Scotch oatmeal being the staple. During the summer months other farina has been tried by masters, such as rice meal, Indian corn meal, sago, biscuit, and coarse-ground wheat meal, with one result—disappointment. Dog biscuit, so called, is manufactured for the purpose, and contains a great amount of rubbish; but those prepared from genuine coarse flour, unadulterated—of which there is little chance—might answer the purpose, when hounds are not in work; but having once used wheaten flour, ground from our own corn at a country mill, when oatmeal had risen to the enormous price of £22 per ton, we must speak of it as a failure, and Indian corn also.

If, preparatory to cub-hunting, hounds should require dressing at all—which with the rules we have laid down for diet, alteratives, and exercise, they ought not—the most simple and efficacious remedy is one composed of three parts of rape oil and one of turpentine, thickened to the consistency of cream with sulphur, and rubbed in by hand, not by brush. To this may be added a small proportion of soft soap, which will cause the dressing to adhere more closely to the skin, and assist also in washing it off again. Avoid all mercurial preparations as you would poison, for which there exists no necessity, except, as we have before stated, in virulent cases of red mange. Sulphur we know to be one of the most useful and efficacious remedies which can be employed in all cutaneous diseases, and when given internally, works its way quickly

through the system, and out by the pores of the skin. The most critical periods for hounds—we may add for horses also—are spring and autumn, when they are shedding their coats; and it is then that a little irritation of the skin will generally appear, which is of easy cure, by sprinkling a small quantity of plain yellow sulphur over the hound's back, or upon the straw which forms the bedding. Some economists advise the discontinuance of straw during the heat of summer, as not requisite, being moreover productive of vermin. We say, never suffer your hounds to sleep on bare benches or boarding. The bedding may be less in quantity, but of the same first-rate quality as used in winter. Vermin are never found in any well-regulated kennel.

CHAPTER XI.

"Merry it is, in the good greenwood,
When the mavis and merle are singing;
When the cub sweeps by, and the hounds are in cry,
And the huntsman's horn is ringing."

Cub-hunting, the rehearsal of foxhunting—Teaching the young ideas how to *hunt*—Tutors and governesses for the entry—Division of the pack—Early dawn most favourable for scent—A single hound a match for a fox—Rambler showing the white feather, and sent rambling—Cub-hunting in the evening—Objections to it—Giving views—Blooding the entry—Ill effects of lifting young hounds—More haste, less speed—The meaning of the horn—Babbling and skirting.

CUB-HUNTING is the rehearsal of foxhunting, in which actor and actress with their company are practising their parts in anticipation of appearing before the public on the opening day of the season; and, to carry on the simile, we find as few interested in these preliminary lessons in the woodlands as antetheatrical exhibitions. No very agreeable entertainment can be expected from hearing schoolboys floundering through the Latin or Greek authors placed in their hands, supposed to be of the easiest comprehension to juvenile minds. The romantic tale of the loves of Pyramus and Thisbe took our fancy exceedingly when only just beginning to imagine what true love might be. So deep an impression did this fairy tale make upon our

minds, that although nearly half a century has passed over our head since its first perusal, we believe we might repeat without much trouble every line of it. When nicely recited by an interesting youth, fully impressed with the romantic incidents connected with it, the story possesses great interest; but few would have patience to hear a stupid boy hammering away at some hard words and making bad shots at others.

Few wish to be present at the schooling of young foxhounds, which is, candidly speaking, very uninteresting, dull work, except to masters; and many of these shirk this part of the business altogether, leaving it in the hands of huntsmen and whips to get the entry tolerably perfect in their lessons, before performing in the presence of their betters. It was our practice to draw out so many of our old brood-bitches and dog-hounds becoming slow, to form with the entry a pack of themselves, wherewith to commence the cub-hunting season—an equal number of each, if possible—and let them work together up to the end of October. A draft was then made of the young which had gone amiss and the old not able to run up. Where the kennel is not considered sufficiently large to admit of this arrangement, a few young hounds are put into the pack at a time, until all have learnt their first lesson and comprehended the game they are to pursue. Rarely, however, have we seen a pack so managed to be thoroughly steady. The young, by running riot at first—which they certainly will do—unsettle the one-season hunters, and a hullabaloo,

cracking of whips, and vehement objurgations follow, which scare the good, and create great confusion. Even of the shortest pack, not exceeding thirty couples, we would rather make two divisions than adopt this plan. Ten or a dozen old hounds are quite enough, where more cannot be spared, to teach an entry of double their number how to set about their business; and this little knot of veterans holding together, is quite sufficient to kill a brace of cubs, or more if desired, without any other assistance. The young ones may push away upon other scents—so let them—full of spirits and high courage. Certain allowance must be made for the exhibition of these, before they know the scent of their legitimate game; and probably many of the entry have done a bit of hare-hunting at their walks, with Shag and Viper; but when once blooded to fox, well-bred foxhounds rarely give much trouble afterwards to the whippers-in.

For the first morning's cub-hunting, the easiest covert for killing them should be selected; and as fixtures are never made previously on such occasions, the choice of weather rests with the huntsman—so far at least that there is no necessity for beginning on a windy, unpropitious day. In a dry autumn, early dawn is the most favourable time for scent, and the drag of cubs to their kennel when barred out from their earths easily followed up by sagacious old hounds. There is another advantage with *peep-o'-day* hunting: cubs or foxes are not in a condition, from a late supper, or very early breakfast, to run long before their enemies—in fact they

are often found napping, which is not such a rare occurrence as catching a weasel asleep; and, notwithstanding the discussion in "The Field" some short time since about a single hound killing a fox, we should have drafted any hound, male or female, which would decline such an encounter. A big burly dog, of twenty-five or even twenty-three inches in height, with corresponding muscular power, must be a cur in grain to turn tail upon an animal of not half his weight or strength, and which he is supposed to have been pursuing with the most bloodthirsty intentions.

One hound only during our long experience as M. F. H. do we remember showing the white feather when meeting his fox, and that individual was sent to us from a neighbouring pack. Good he certainly was in all points save one. He drew well, ran hard, and hunted his fox decently; but kill him he would not, or attempt to do it. His dismissal arose from the following circumstance:—

We were running into our fox, which was making for a head of open earths, and had nearly reached them, when this hound, Rambler, catching view of him before any other, ran out of the pack and overtook him just at the covert-side. The whoop was just escaping from our lips, when, to our utter disgust, the fox turned short round, showed his teeth, and Rambler retrograded, giving thereby time for the fox to reach the earths. For this cowardly act, Rambler's travelling ticket was issued for the first fitting opportunity, to go with other delinquents included in the draft. We do

not aver that every young hound when first entered would grapple with his foe in deadly conflict, unaided by others; but by the 1st of November, when thoroughly acquainted with the game they are to pursue, we expected each individual to do his duty in this respect single-handed, agreeing with the old adage, that "Catch is a good dog, but Holdfast is better."

Some masters, from disinclination to get up, as they call it, in the middle of the night, have had recourse to cub-hunting in the evening, when, without inconvenience to themselves, they can see how the young hounds enter. There are, however, many objections to this mode of proceeding. Scent becomes worse always towards nightfall. There is no drag to a fox's kennel, and other game is beginning to move about without being disturbed by hounds. Cubs also are leary, and can stand a deal more rattling at this time than in the morning. We don't think this of much consequence after the second or third day's hunting, for, although at first advocating an easy victory, and an early return to kennel, we consider a little harder work, when used to their game, of great benefit to the entry, by which their stoutness and resolution are to be tested. Cubs cannot always be brought to hand just at the moment they are needed, and by continual changing from one to another, hounds may be running for two or three hours before catching one; and the great drawback to evening hunting is that, in addition to the scent becoming worse every hour, the shades of night are falling around

you, and may put a stop to finishing with satisfaction.

Beginning at four o'clock A.M. is a different affair altogether. The day is before you, and you can knock the cubs about, in the shade of the woodlands, as long as you please. Cub-hunting is a tame, quiet, elderly gentleman's amusement, in comparison with foxhunting. Hallooing, screaming, and cracking of whips ought to be avoided as much as possible, and the chief duty of the whipper-in is to prevent the hounds going away with the old fox. The huntsman's business is to keep near to them, encouraging the young to join the cry of the old; and as cubs—unless stub-bred—will be continually trying to get into the earths, he will know whereabouts to give them a meeting, if that sort of thing is desirable, which we think not. We do not even approve giving young hounds a view over or down the drive. Nothing is gained by such an *extravaganza*, except ocular demonstration of the animal they are to pursue, not by *sight*, but by *scent*. Why then give them a view at all? They will soon see and taste him, when his carcase is held aloft for their especial admiration, before being consigned to the jaws of their older companions. What further proof is necessary for the identification of their game? At first they follow him by his scent, they then assist in worrying him to death, and lastly partake of his blood. What doubt can they entertain further as to his personalities?

We have as grave objections to hounds being

allowed to go to view-halloas in season, as adopting this course of instruction to the entry out of season. It all leads to the same inevitable result—distraction. If boys at school require a thorough grounding in grammar to make them proficients in the Greek or Latin languages, so much the more imperative is it to ground well the young foxhounds' noses—keep them there, and they cannot fail to do well, if there is anything like well-doing in their composition. Lift them up by halloas and screams, and they will assuredly do ill. Independently, however, of the mischief done to the entry by this wild work, you do not get a whit nearer to your object—handling your fox—by throwing them in upon him when crossing the drive, but quite the reverse. The old hounds are thrown off the line, and unless there happens to be a rare scent, the young will throw up their heads at the very first short turn made by the cub, and then all is in confusion.

Again, by teaching the young to look out for their game, they will be ever on the *qui vive*, and give chase to any other object which they catch sight of; and how are they to distinguish a fox from a hare, at a long distance? The whipper-in is then called to rate and scarify the delinquents, if he can catch them; and they may well wonder why they are punished for doing that which their huntsman had been cheering them to do—run something they had seen crossing the drive before they knew "what's what." We say, never give young hounds a view at all. Harriers are spoilt by this sort of

thing ; why not foxhounds ? Both are equally dependent on their noses. Before cub-hunting, they ought to be made acquainted with the meaning of the horn, when out at exercise—the huntsman recalling them by it when allowed to run in advance of him ; and as for the *yoicksing* and *hoicksing*, we have before expressed our opinion on vociferous dog-language.

Supposing the object to be, on entering young hounds, to make them handy, tractable, and steady, their instructor must be steady and quiet, and never in a hurry or flurry. All of the canine species adapt themselves to the peculiarities of their owner. If he is flighty, they will be the same. If quiet, their demeanour will be the reflex of his. By the conduct of a pack of foxhounds in the field, the character of their huntsman may be immediately discerned. There is as much difference between the dispositions of young foxhounds as boys at school. Some enter readily, others slowly ; and a few, perhaps, do not manifest any disposition to enter at all. We are not partial to precocious youngsters of any sort—biped or quadruped—and very fast young hounds, as well as fast young gentlemen, are generally the first to break down. We must, however, for a certain time, let all run or work together. Some from the first day settle down quickly to their line of business, never needing the smart of whipcord during their lives ; but there will be mischievous ones in every entry—*Pickles* of their schools, which must be left to the tender mercies of Jem and Jack, to be broken of their bad

habits. There is one fault only for which a young hound ought to be drafted, and may be put fairly aside immediately—too much tongue. We have never known an instance of amendment in this case. Babbling increases with years. It cannot be determined whether a young hound, not free with his tongue, can be classed among mutes, before a fair trial has been given him. He may probably be of a modest, taciturn disposition, or, having tasted Jack's whipcord for venturing to proclaim he was running a fox, when Jack would insist he was running a hare, he might feel shy of speaking on the subject again for some time.

Skirting is not of very early development ; but if a young hound does persist in taking a line of his own, after repeated attempts to keep him with the pack, he must be underlined in the list.

CHAPTER XII.

"Oh! there is sweetness in the morning air,
That sloth and luxury must vainly hope to share."

The twofold use of cub-hunting—Barring out young foxes—Shyness of fox family—Main earths—Untenable objections to them—Poachers, and their *modus operandi*—Former value of foxes—"Light come, light go"—Fence months to other game no defence to foxes—The May fox and July cub—Early cub hunting recommended—Difference between grass and arable countries—Hardness of ground injurious to hounds' feet—Easy places and short work—Early impressions most lasting—When to let well alone—Marking to ground—Scene at a coalpit.

CUB-HUNTING is not more necessary for instructing young foxhounds in the wiles of the game they are to pursue, than for making young foxes acquainted with the enemies they have to avoid. Cubs require routing to force them from home, and seek shelter in more distant coverts; and when the door of the house is locked in which they have hitherto found refuge, they are obliged to look out for other lodgings. We can well imagine the feeling of the houseless desolates, when first barred out from the homes of their happy cubhood, about which they have been wont to gambol in the twilight, as soon as the setting sun had disappeared beneath the horizon—with what eagerness to rush to the spot where the buzzing of beetle or cockchafer gives

notice of striking the ground, and falling to them an easy prey, when unable of themselves to procure any other food until the return of their mother with something more substantial for supper in the shape of rabbit or leveret.

Litters of cubs are not often laid down in a large head of earths, such being used occasionally by badgers and other animals of the pole-cat and stoat species, and, therefore, not sufficiently private for the occupation of a vixen with her family of five small children—that being the common number, although we twice have seen litters of seven and nine. Foxes are notoriously very shy and fond of seclusion, and on that account the vixen generally selects a retired place—an old rabbit-burrow, little frequented, in a small coppice or bank facing the west, or an old broken dry drain not far from the covert-side—wherein to deposit her cubs until they are able to run about, when they are removed by her to stronger places of refuge.

Objections have been raised to main earths, as leading rather to the destruction than salvation of foxes, to which we cannot subscribe. True, they may be known to poachers, but they are equally well known to earth-stoppers, whose duty it is to watch them throughout the season; and if these deep caverns in the bowels of the earth are fastened up, as some writers on foxhunting have advised, foxes will find other places not half so secure to hide their heads in, and which probably may be unknown to their protectors. Foxes bred underground will lie underground somewhere in boisterous

weather, or after a heavy fall of snow, through which they are easily traced by poachers to their new burrows or drains, and as easily bolted into a net by the poacher's dog. Main earths are their only safe lodging-houses in sandy or gravelly districts, from which they can with the greatest difficulty be dislodged, on account of the depth and ramifications of these underground labyrinthian passages. The best terrier in the world could not force an old fox to vacate his holding in such a place, neither could he drag him out whilst living; and poachers' dogs are not over hard in the mouth, which would defeat their masters' objects. We have seen a large high net, of extent sufficient to enclose all the mouths and outlets of the earth or fox-burrow, set upon sticks, with bells attached to it inside, while the poacher and his dog were lying on a sack to await patiently the voluntary issuing of the animal; but this was a tedious process. To keep watch through two or three dark wintry nights, until the fox was starved out of his den, was not less likely to starve with cold the besiegers of his fortress. Yet the *auri sacra fames* induces men to submit to almost any hardships or inclemency of weather, and two guineas for a stout healthy fox—the usual price formerly—amounted to as much money as a labourer's wages for a month. "Light come, light go," has been and still is the distinguishing motto of fox-stealers, game poachers, and all of that class who prefer a pilfering life to an honest one.

Fox-netting in the present age is little practised,

for two reasons: first, that the value of the animal has been considerably diminished, on the old score that the supply is more than equal to the demand; and, secondly, that cheap articles being the order of the day, and packs of foxhounds so multitudinous, thistle-whipping masters won't give two guineas for a bagman to turn out on high days and holidays for the gratification of their supporters in green; consequently, the traffic in live foxes has diminished, and the skins are now more in request than the living carcases heretofore. For half a sovereign, few men would lie down on the cold damp ground through two or three nights, more surely committed to catch the ague or rheumatism than to catch their fox. Steel traps are more commonly used now for old foxes; but as every hunting country has become pretty well stocked with this kind of game, cubs scarcely pay for the trouble of catching them.

Grass countries possess many and great advantages over corn-growing districts, and in some, one vacation month only exists between the killing of a May fox and a July cub. We may have too much of any good thing; and, fond as we are of foxhunting, this short respite for hounds must and does tell tales upon them, as it diminishes unnecessarily the tails of foxes. Game are allowed their fence months, with the exception of hares and rabbits, which are without the pale of the law, simply, we suppose, in consideration of their breeding eight months out of the twelve, and, from their productiveness, likely to overrun the land. Foxes, still

ranking in the catalogue of vermin, may, as a matter of course, be killed at all times of the year and by anybody; and save for foxhunting having become quite the fashion, and public opinion enlisted on its side, the vulpine race would ere now have been nearly extinct in this country.

Some few masters of hounds, having unlimited power to do as they list, may therefore kill their May fox and July cub, if the number of foxes suffice for such extravagance; but these instances are only to be found in woodland countries. In moderation, the earlier young hounds can be entered to their game, the more steady they will become before the opening day of the regular season; but we think the time appointed for grouse-shooting is quite early enough for cub-hunting to commence also, and this can only be done in favoured localities, where the woods are surrounded by pasture land on every side. In arable countries, the corn is seldom cleared from the fields before the 1st of September, varying a week or two according to the season; and if the weather continues hot and dry, cub-hunting must be delayed until a heavy fall of rain, to moisten the ground, or your hounds will suffer severely from beginning to hunt on such hard surface. Long toes are not conducive to the beauty or efficiency of a foxhound.

Whatever may be said as to the tameness of cub-hunting, it is the reverse of tame work to hounds; in fact, we do not know any more severe than a woodland day in autumn before the meuses of the covert are opened, with the leaves yet green

upon the briers and underwood. The trackway through which foxes and hares pass is sufficiently wide to let them steer clear of burs and brambles. The leading couples of a pack of foxhounds, however, press furiously forward, not in a line, but with extended front, crashing and dashing through all obstacles, regardless of scratches and bruises. In the thickest part of the covert, where grow rushes, reed, and blackthorn in rank luxuriance, there is the fox's kennel more secure from disturbances than in any other quarter of the wood. One of the chief objects in cub-hunting is to make the young hounds accustomed to face the most dense thickets or gorse-brakes, and by their manner of doing this will their characters for resolution or weakness be shown.

We have recommended easy places at first, where blood may be obtained without much difficulty, and we also advise short work at the same time. Kill your first cub as soon as you can fairly, that is, by fair hunting, without mobbing or hustling, and take your hounds home. Don't draw for a second. Early impressions are ever most lasting. Let your entry return to the kennel flushed with victory, though easily won, and they will always believe they are to be victorious. Let them go home disappointed, fagged, and weary, after a hard, unsuccessful day's work, and they will know that they can be beaten. Herein lies the secret of the success or failure of every pack of foxhounds dependent upon their master's or huntsman's knowledge, *when*

to let well alone. We have been met on this point by the observation that staghounds, as they are called, rarely taste the blood of deer, and yet run their game with as much apparent eagerness as foxhounds follow theirs. All the hunting species of dogs love a scent of some sort, which instinct directs them to pursue, and in which they are encouraged by their masters. The pointer works all day without the least expectation of tasting the blood of the game he has been taught to hunt for. More, he knows punishment would be inflicted upon him for ruffling a feather ; yet there is no lack of spirit or courage in scouring the stubbles or turnip-fields to bring it within range of his master's double-barrel. Right and left the dead birds fall. The dog is satisfied ! the victory won by his masterly skill ; his own exertions have been rewarded by seeing the dead game lying on the ground before him. Moreover, the hand laid gently upon his head with the approving smile and kind words, spoken in kindly tones, " Well done ! good dog," are of themselves a sufficient recompense ; and, with a look betokening his gratified feelings, Ponto goes forth with renewed alacrity and zeal to hunt for the other scattered birds of the covey. Now, let this dog be transferred to a bad shot, who would day after day blaze away with very indifferent success, and a corresponding change would soon be perceptible in Ponto's deportment. He would become slack in ranging ; run in, perhaps, upon the birds ; and give chase to a winged one, in

despair at his new owner's blundering way of doing business.

As to staghounds, it is well known that the scent of deer is the strongest as well as sweetest of all game. Hounds luxuriate in it. They have no necessity to work with their noses on the ground, like foxhounds or harriers, over and through many opposing difficulties. The scent of this large animal is carried widely behind him as he flies up wind. Widely and wildly do his pursuers stream away in his wake, with heads well up in the air, to inhale the odoriferous vapours floating there. They have little else to do than put their best legs foremost, except upon very rare occasions. And then the result. The deer is brought to bay, and their victory is won. They have beaten him; he can no longer escape them on land, and therefore takes refuge in the water. No doubt, like many of their assistants in the chase, they would like to have a taste of his haunch; but the master says "No," and he lives to run another day. They are partly, if not wholly, satisfied. In like manner, foxhounds are not down-hearted when they have run their fox to ground; but when, day after day, they are prevented by ill-luck, *i.e.*, bad scenting weather, or the injudicious interference of their huntsman, from coming to a satisfactory conclusion, the "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and they become dispirited.

Marking a fox to ground is also a very necessary lesson in the education of young hounds, and a cub

must be occasionally dug out and given to them upon the earth. To effect this, a large rabbit-burrow may be left open, which they have frequented. When rattled about until beaten, they will often seek shelter in a single pipe in the wood-bank, or in a short drain under a gateway, from which they may easily be bolted by the terrier, or dug out. There may be said to be more honour in the breach than in the performance of this act. We do not advocate an unnecessary repetition of it; that necessity only exists casually in cub-hunting, to teach the entry where to stop when the scent fails before them, and, after a hard toilsome day in foxhunting, that hounds may not be disappointed of their reasonable hope.

We recollect rather an appalling incident connected with digging out a cub, which made us wary in prying into the hidden places of the earth. The cub had found refuge in what we thought to be a small drain in the covert, as we could touch him with the end of a long stick. Extraction having been decided upon, since the young hounds had been working hard all the morning, and were at that time fifteen miles from kennel, a spade was borrowed from a labourer, and in a few minutes we came upon the unfortunate cub, which was pulled out by one of the old hounds, and dispatched immediately. Our horror may be imagined when on looking farther into the drain we made the discovery that he had been standing over the mouth of an old coal-pit shaft, to avoid falling

into the yawning abyss; the poor brute had preferred falling into the jaws of his enemies to a lingering death by starvation in the dark regions beneath. Had we been aware of the dire extremity to which this fox had been reduced, nothing would have induced us to take his life; and we reflected with gratitude upon our escape from a fate which might have been, save for his instinct, of the most fearful kind.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
Cheerily rouse the slumb'ring morn."

Master's presence necessary to judge of entry—Duties devolving on masters—Some excuses for neglecting them—First-class huntsmen—Duke of Beaufort's letter to Will Long—Goosey and Will Goodall—Tom Sebright and others—Anecdote of Tommy Moore, the Poet—Tribute of respect to Charles Treadwell—Wanton shedding of fox-blood—Accidents may happen—Weeding litters—Bloodthirsty preservers—Counting noses—"I never counts 'em whilst they suck"—The fashion in foxhunting.

THE remarks of "Dryasdust" on cub-hunting, in *Land and Water*, deserve honourable mention among all foxhunters, and we trust they may produce also some good effects upon those masters of hounds who are disposed to leave the tuition of the entry entirely in the hands of their huntsman, as gentlemen too commonly do, the breaking of young pointers to their keepers, "and thus," as "Dryasdust" observes, "the master, who should be cognizant of every detail, and with whom should rest every appeal in all that concerns the management of a pack of foxhounds, loses the opportunity of judging for himself what are likely to prove the characters of the young aspirants of the pack, and he is obliged to entrust the very important task of drafting to his huntsman, for the fulfilment of

that duty now rapidly ensues, and the satisfactory performance of which must engage the most serious and experienced consideration that can be brought to bear upon it."

More true words were never penned. Yet how few masters in the present age will give their time and attention to this most important of all the important duties attached to their office—watching the progress of the entry, and determining from their own observation what young hounds are deserving a place in the kennel list, as likely to contribute to the strength and efficiency of the pack. Gentlemen undertaking to hunt a country have many unpleasant as well as pleasant tasks to fulfil, and some will argue, that where they employ a first-class huntsman, thoroughly acquainted with his duties and business, there can be no necessity for them to curtail their hours of rest to superintend the entering of their young hounds; and there are no doubt many huntsmen of the present day, as there have been in past times, who will faithfully discharge their duties in this respect, and do ample justice to the pack under their control—men above suspicion, who would never think of drafting a hound for a bribe, and who really take as much interest in showing a good and clever entry as the master himself. In large establishments of old date we find this to be especially the case, and we could mention many who have had almost the sole management of the pack within our recollection, whose zeal was only equalled by their fidelity to the trust confided in them. Such as Philip Payne,

for many years huntsman to the Badminton, and to whose knowledge and experience in breeding it is said the hounds in that kennel owed their superiority. He was succeeded by Will Long, and, irrespective of our opinion of him, we think the letter addressed to him by the present Duke of Beaufort, when leaving his Grace's service, is sufficient proof of the estimation in which he had been held. As this letter was printed in the year 1855, we may, without scruple, insert a few sentences from it, honourable alike to master and man :—

"As you have asked me whether I am satisfied with the manner in which you discharged your duties up to the time of your leaving my service, I can truly say, that I am thoroughly convinced that you performed those duties diligently and conscientiously, and to the advantage of your employer. The hounds having been thrice in your time reduced to half their number, you were placed in the difficult position of having to double their numbers in a short time. That you did this carefully and well, and showed great talent in so doing, must be apparent to any one who looks over the hounds carefully at this present time."

In the Belvoir kennels we remember Goosey, and poor Will Goodall, who was cut down in the prime of life, both of whom well deserved the confidence reposed in them by their noble masters. In the latter we took great interest from his joyous good-humour and lack of all self-conceit; and we must do him the justice to say that, although accused of a little flightiness in the field, he had

brought the Belvoir pack to a standard of symmetry and excellence far above that—as far as our recollection serves—which we noticed under the management of his predecessor in office. Goosey bred many clever hounds, whose names and measures are dotted down in our note-book; but Goodall could show numbers equally clever, and all possessing a family likeness; in short, the last time we paid a visit to the Belvoir kennels, the year before Goodall's death, the pack had then attained the acme of perfection.

Tom Sebright also, who had been, when I last saw him, thirty-seven years huntsman to the Milton pack, obtained a world-wide reputation as a breeder of foxhounds, irrespective of his talents displayed in the field. Jem Hills, with the Heythrop, the two Treadwells, one with Mr. Farquarson, and the other for many years huntsman to the Bramham Moor pack, were men deserving the confidence of their masters. And in later years Charles Payne, of Pytcheley notoriety, has exhibited talents of no mean order, in raising that pack to a high standard, which, when he first undertook their management, might be said to consist of odds and ends.

We have mentioned these huntsmen, whose conduct and character have come under our own observation, to prove that there have been, and ever will be, men of this class, to whom the management of a pack of foxhounds may be safely entrusted, even without the interference of a master. It does not follow, as a matter of course, that men filling such responsible situations, with credit

to themselves and satisfaction to their employers, are of low plebeian origin, although occupying the position of servants. Their pedigrees may not, perchance, be found in "Burke's Landed Gentry," yet, as we have ever expressed the opinion that "blood will tell," we entertain no doubt that many of these men have better blood flowing in their veins than some of the families Mr. Burke has been pleased to honour with a place in his pages.

The story is told of Tom Moore, the poet, when dining with the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV., and the name of Dr. Moore, the author of "Zeluco," being mentioned, the Prince asked if he was of the same family. Moore, thinking his humble origin was well known, and that the question was intended as an insult, answered, "No, please your Royal Highness; I am the son of Tom Moore, the grocer in Dublin,"—an answer which offended the Prince, and he was never asked to Carleton House again. That the author of "Lalla Rookh" was a man of low vulgar extraction, every line of that poem disproves, although his father might have been a grocer. In the annals of the poor we should find many now occupying a very humble position, whose ancestors have held high places in society, and *vice versâ*. Millionaires spring from the lowest ranks, whose god has been Mammon, and whose motto through life in making money may be borrowed from old Horace, "*Si possis recte si non quocunque modo possis.*"

Having said thus much, as in justice bound, in

praise of such huntsmen to whom we render the honour due to them, we must, however, admit that their number is comparatively small, and as a general rule, the observations of "Dryasdust" are unfortunately too well founded. During our career as huntsman for nearly thirty years, we found one man only, out of seven or eight others, first whipper-in and kennel huntsman, to whom we would have trusted the management of the pack, either in the kennel or field—and that individual was the late huntsman of the Bramham Moor, Charles Treadwell, to whom we could securely have trusted untold gold; and we believe no bribe, however large, would have induced him to betray his master's interest.

As to the killing of cubs and foxes, notwithstanding we think nearly all huntsmen agreed on one point—to kill them when they can, to count scalps on the kennel door, they are rather too indifferent how the scalps are obtained, and we remember a story told—it may be such in reality, *i.e.*, a fib—of a huntsman allowing his hounds to devour a whole litter one morning! Even were this a fact, it admits of palliation or explanation, since accidents will occur in the best-regulated families; and with the intention of taking one only out of a litter, we remember once to have had the ill-luck to kill four, and without the power of preventing such unpremeditated slaughter. You cannot prevent cubs—hitherto undisturbed and unacquainted with their enemies—being chopped up sometimes in a very unsatisfactory manner;

and if there is no earth-stopping done for a second litter, the first will suffer more severely than intended, or you must go home. The weeding of the litter, however, ought to depend very much upon their locality. Those bred in pit places ought to be tenderly dealt with, stirring them up a little to let them know "what's what," and unstopping the earths when they have had a sufficient rattling. In large woodlands, more may be taken out of each litter if required, since when the regular hunting season commences, foxes will always resort to the big woods. Although, generally speaking, not more than one member out of the same litter should be killed in a day, we have occasionally been obliged to deviate from this rule, in ticklish places, where a litter has been saved literally to be killed off by the hounds in one day, if possible. This may be called a queer method of fox-preserving, yet there were more than one or two owners or renters of coverts who bred up litters of cubs for us on these conditions, besides keepers to whose wishes we deemed it prudent to yield, and if we had not yielded, the cubs would have disappeared. We remember one morning killing two out of a litter thus circumstanced, which we thought more than sufficient, when the owner of the covert—not a very large one—said, "You are not going home yet?"

"Quite time we should," was our reply; "a brace in one day."

"Oh, no; there are five in the litter, and as I have viewed one going away, some little time ago,

to those spinnies under the hill, I want to see how your young hounds can run over the open."

We pleaded in vain for a respite to this young fox, which had taken a capital line of country, in the hope of his showing us a run in the season.

"Nothing like time present," was his answer; "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and you are not sure of finding him again—besides which, I am no rider to hounds, as you know, so here I shall sit in my saddle on the brow of the hill, whilst you go down to turn him out, and then I shall be able to tell you which is the fastest hound in your entry, and how they come on over the greensward—won't that be a pretty sight?" he asked, with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

"Others would like to witness that sight as well as yourself."

"Very likely; but as I breed cubs for my own amusement and yours, not for the field, about whom I don't care a rap, I am quite sure you will indulge my fancy: then we shall have two young and two old left still."

His wishes being somewhat in the nature of commands, we were obliged to go in search of Number 3, and our friend on the hill saw more of the run than we did, the cub being caught just as he reached the wood-hedge, greatly to the owner's delight.

We were, however, never guilty of killing cubs for the sake of counting noses, which huntsmen generally are prone to do. This is their weak point; and to be paraded in print as the destroyer

of so many brace of foxes by the end of the season, they take the opportunity of swelling their list of slain by snapping up cubs, when there can be no merit in killing them.

An old huntsman, whose name does not at this moment occur to us, was once twitted by a junior holding a similar appointment, for the paucity of his number booked. His reply is deserving the attention of huntsmen in the present day :—

"I never counts 'em whilst they sucks."

Our sporting papers are doing not only little service, but much mischief to the cause, by publishing any amount of foxes killed before the 1st of November ; up to that time they ought, if there must be such notice taken of them, to be entered by their proper name, "cubs," and not entered on the list as foxes. "Poor is the triumph o'er the timid hare," and poorer still the triumph over a litter of cubs, barred out from their home, and murdered by the sudden onslaught of their enemies, biped as well as quadruped, with screams and yells, and the thundering roar of the pack in their rear, enough to frighten them out of their senses.

The first day of November is the first recognized meeting of foxhunters for the dispatch of regular business—the 1st of September for partridge shooting—the 1st of October for the slaughtering of pheasants ; we say slaughter of pheasants, because they are driven up in a corner, like cattle in South America, to be killed in a wholesale manner. To shoot game before these legalized

periods, involves the penalty of paying so much money to the exchequer for killing it out of season, and to appear at the covert side in regular trim before the accredited time, involves generally the penalty of being miscalled a muff. Fox-hunting is the fashion—but it is not in fashion till the 1st of November, until which time, masters, huntsmen, and whips do everything in their own way. There are no regular fixtures—no regular hours of meeting or leaving off—no regular course of drawing. They are amenable to no criticisms. It is the cub-hunting season, they must be let alone.

We award them all this, and more ; but then we don't see any reason for accrediting them with cubs, slain as so many foxes, to be added to the list, of which we know nothing. Cub-hunting ought to pass for what it is in reality—the blooding of the young hounds to their legitimate game, and instructing them in their preliminary lessons : all we beg is, not to be disgusted with the sight in print of some twenty or thirty brace of foxes being killed before the 29th of October.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The fading many-colour'd woods,
Shade deepening over shade, the country round
Imbrown : a crowded umbrage, dusk and dun,
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To sooty dark." THOMSON.

Visits and visitations to cubs—Pet places—Idleness the parent of vice even in foxes—To be kept moving—Small and large coverts—Mr. Ward and the Craven country—Southgrove the elysium of foxes—Friendly societies—A novel plan for breaking them up—Faggots *vice* foxhounds—Always at home—Woodland foxes.

If practicable, every litter of cubs, bred within the limits of the hunt, should be visited by the young hounds before the first day of pheasant shooting. To those in small coverts, a short morning call will be sufficient, just to stir them up a little, upon others in large woodlands, a visitation may be inflicted,—a thorough good routing. There are pet places in every country, which masters often spare until the commencement of regular hunting, but nothing is gained by forbearance. Young foxes, from having been so long undisturbed, become fat and indolent, and being unacquainted with their enemies, are easily snapped up, without affording any sport at all, besides which, being ignorant of country, save, perhaps,

within a mile or two of their home, they know not where to run. We recollect killing four young foxes out of the litter of five, which had not been previously disturbed, on the 1st of November, by a singular misadventure. The first brace were caught in covert without any sport. The second having gone away to another small brake about a mile distant, which lay in our draw for that day, came unfortunately across our path, and the pack again dividing, each lot killed their fox in the open, after a short scurry, on one of the best scenting days we ever remember. This pet place did not produce us another fox until after Christmas, and we thereby were taught a lesson—always to give every litter a turn before the opening day of the season, leaving the earths unbarred, however, that the cubs could get to ground, when disposed to do so.

We cannot prevent foxes being killed or chopped in small coverts; but we must, if possible, prevent their being eaten by the hounds within the wood-hedge. Take them away quickly out into the adjoining field, some distance from it, and then let the dismemberment of the carcase be performed. Although deterred from lying during the day in small coverts, from which they have been recently routed by hounds, foxes visit their old haunts by night, and are cautious in kennelling again near the slaughter-ground of one of their family. In large woods they may and will shift their ground from one quarter to another, but to break up a fox in a small gorse-brake, or any pet place of

that kind, insures it being drawn blank for weeks, if not months. Moderately-sized coverts ought not to be visited by hounds oftener than once a month, and of big woods it may be said as of walnut-trees, in the old couplet, "the more you beat them the better they be." We are disinclined to believe that women or spaniels would be much improved in disposition by severe chastisement. Walnut-trees may be benefited by it, for anything we know to the contrary, and some large woodlands admit of being knocked about once a week with advantage.

During Mr. Ward's tenancy of the Craven country, there was a large covert lying on the outskirts, called Southgrove, which, being a considerable distance from the kennels, then located at Hungerford, was rarely drawn by his hounds in the regular season; in fact it was used principally for cub-hunting, and as a *dernier ressort* in the spring of the year, when a May fox, or half-a-dozen, might be safely killed, without doing the slightest injury to the prospects of sport for the ensuing season. Consequently, upon foxes being allowed to hold their own places with so little interruption, Southgrove became a kind of elysium, where the vulpine race congregated in large numbers to enjoy their *otium*, and when disturbed at long intervals, they played their cards so well on the reciprocity system of mutual assistance, that the hounds were beaten long before any of the fraternity could be brought to hand; in short, there was a pack of foxes on foot to contend with

a pack of hounds. The issue may be anticipated—no sport—no runs. Foxes were not *obliged* to run, and of course they would not run.

Well, it so happened that a very celebrated master of foxhounds, who had won an immensity of laurels in the Quorn country, no less a person than the late Assheton Smith, having obtained permission to hunt this covert from Mr. Ward's successor, threatened annihilation to this great preserve of foxes. Still, with all his experience and knowledge of their habits and wiles, these wily animals defied for a time all his strenuous efforts to dislodge them—go they would not. He then bethought him of a stratagem hitherto unpractised in the art—smoking them out, not from the earths, but from the wood altogether, large bonfires being lit in the drives during the night to scare them away. Some of the most timid did, we believe, take this as notice to quit, retreating in orderly manner to another stronghold not far distant, called Collingbourne Wood, but the old sticklers for place held on still, regardless of the new element employed for their ejectment.

This singular proceeding adopted by the Squire of Tedworth created no small stir amongst the old foxhunters of that and other adjoining countries, exciting the ire of that most orthodox preacher and foxhunter, the late Fulwar Fowle, a stanch supporter of Mr. Ward's hounds and country, by whom the division of the latter was regarded as a most unwarrantable infringement of the laws of foxhunting, equally obnoxious as the new mode of

trying to make foxes break covert; and he was heard to remark to a stranger joining the hunt, "We have something new, sir, in these parts regarding foxhunting introduced by Mr. Smith, who in place of hounds uses fire, to *smoke* them out!" However novel the experiment, and unsportsmanlike, by dint of bonfires by night and hounds by day, foxes at last began to fly, and Southgrove became a weekly fixture, one day per week throughout the whole season, and with this continued routing it was rarely drawn blank.

"Always at home," is a great thing to masters of hounds and genuine sportsmen—finding the animal of the first consideration, when found, of minor importance—and we should as soon expect to hear a man complaining of having too much money as a master of too many foxes. The latter may be not quite so easily dispersed as sovereigns, but they possess this advantage over coin—that however scattered, you may make pretty sure of finding them again. Fast men abhor big woods, yet are they generally indebted to woodland foxes for their runs of the season. Big woods are the preserves from which our game is circulated throughout the country, and when properly hunted supply the pet places with the best and straightest running foxes.

CHAPTER XV.

Faults in foxhounds—Hard work and no play makes Jack a dull boy - Trial of speed in the open—Hasty drafting censured—Beckford's anecdote—Packing together—The cry of hounds—Happy medium — Touch and go — Noisy at fences — Will Goodall's opinion of large hounds—The late Assheton Smith and Freeman—The music of the pack—Gervase Markham thereon.

As "hard work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," so must there be some relaxation given to young hounds from hard woodland work, to which, when sufficiently inured, a scamper over the open country with a young fox will be of service, teaching them to get away from covert, to horn and holloa. Moreover, the master and huntsman will have an opportunity of seeing how they can run together, whether some have the speed of others, and whether there will not be one or two not able to run up at all. Well-shaped foxhounds are rarely troubled with the *slows*, and it is not to be taken for granted because a young hound does not at first run up with the rest, that he cannot do so. This may arise from want of inclination rather than from want of physical power. We should be slow to draft a promising young hound for such a fault —if fault it can be fairly called—without giving

him time to amend his ways, having seen many slack at first, turn out the quickest in their second season. Beckford relates an instance of a young hound never joining the pack, either in hunting or drawing, until one day, catching a view of his beaten game, he ran up for the finish, and ever afterwards pressed forward to the front. When, however, it becomes clear that any hound has not speed sufficient to keep his proper place, there is very little prospect of improvement; in this respect it is not likely his pace will be increased by feeling his own deficiency; it is more than likely he will cut corners or become a rank skirter. There may be also one or two individuals occasionally too fast for the body of the pack, which must go with the slows to some other destination—drafting from head to tail being the only method of making a pack of foxhounds hold well together.

There is an old simile—a very old one—so old that even Beckford thought it too threadbare to notice in his "Thoughts on Hunting," comparing the running of foxhounds to the flight of pigeons, almost universally adopted by our modern chroniclers of runs in *Bell's Life*, *The Field*, and *Land and Water*, with the addendum of "clustering so close together, that they might be covered by a casting-net." Beckford uses (if we remember rightly) one more appropriate, expressing his opinion that they ought to be, when in chase, "like the horses in the chariot of the sun—all abreast," and in this order pigeons take their flight over the fields, in a long extended line,

which would require a drag instead of a casting-net to enclose them. There can be little doubt that the efficiency of the pack very much depends upon the head they carry. To elucidate this, we will suppose hounds running as a flock of geese fly, with one leader, the rest falling behind in triangular fashion. The foremost foxhound, supposing one to have the speed of the others, when at fault, from his game turning shortly to the right or left, must take a certain time in making his cast to recover the line. But when the body of the pack is of equal speed, the scent is carried on, without interruption, by an extended front taking it up on either side at the point of deviation. However handsome, a young hound too fast for the rest should be drafted, although we know the reluctance of masters and huntsmen to part with anything very ornamental for a slight fault of this kind. But if the efficient working of the pack is of the first consideration—and that cannot be maintained without keeping them well together—drafting must be adopted freely of all likely to mar this object.

There is a great difference between well-bred foxhounds as to tongue, some being much more musical than others, and it is a very nice point to determine the happy medium. Babblers are as universally condemned as mutes, and properly so, since no pack can do well with them, the first always holding back, and the second preventing the pack getting forward. When hounds are running hard, as we call it, heads up and sterns down, there must, of necessity, be little cry at that par-

ticular time, but that is not the time for deciding the question whether they have too much or too little tongue. Hounds may be too free with their tongues without being absolutely babblers, yet this freedom of speech generally ends in babbling when they grow older. We don't like to hear a hound throw his tongue too readily to cry when a fox is first found. We may know for a certainty that old Bounty never told a lie, but we don't approve her proclaiming a find without her own nasal experience of the fact. Again, in hunting, a hound may say too much about it, without being decidedly noisy or a babbler. "Touch and go" ought to be the motto of a foxhound. We have heard of old blue-mottled harriers so delighted with the discovery of a scent, when juniors of this fraternity had failed to unravel it, that they would raise their heads on high with a loud yell, and even spring back a few spaces in an ecstasy of enjoyment at their success.

It is all very well on paper, writing of hounds enjoying a scent, and in the field this sort of thing may suit harriers, but it is destructive of sport with foxhounds. Hundreds—we may say thousands—of times we have seen foxhounds running, not hunting, with a scent so queer (the most expressive term we can use), that not even a whimper could be heard. Still they were going—running briskly, feeling secure the scent was before them, yet not so secure that they would proclaim it as a certainty. This is, or ought to be, the distinguishing characteristic of a pack of foxhounds—always

to the fore, and making the best of a bad matter. Now these same hounds, mute on such occasions, for which they cannot be too highly commended, will open their mouths freely when all doubt is removed from their minds—opining that dogs have minds. We don't like to hear hounds throw their tongues at fences which they ought to get through or over as quickly as possible, without saying anything about it. Again, at park railings and walls some are exceedingly vociferous, instead of trying to surmount them or finding a breach higher or lower down. Here large hounds have the advantage over little ones, and we think generally at all kinds of fences. We remember having a long discussion with poor Will Goodall on this point, relative to the strong bullfinches in the Belvoir Vale, which he considered more easily encountered by small hounds creeping through the meuses, where a large hound could not go.

"Very true," we observed, "but a well-bred big one would take a spring at the fence higher up, and like a heavy weight, force his way through in his stride."

Some years ago the late Squire of Tedworth, better known as Tom Smith, paid a visit to our kennel, when a hound, called Freeman, then a four-season hunter, particularly attracted his attention.

"That is a very clever hound," he remarked; "and the more I look at him the more I like him—capital legs and feet—good shoulders, strong back and loins—in short, I can't see a faulty place. Have you had much from him?"

"No," was our reply.

"May I ask the reason why you have not?"

"Certainly: he is rather too free with his tongue."

"In other words, I suppose he is noisy?"

"No, not that exactly, or you would not have seen him in our kennel; but he speaks twice when once would have been sufficient. That is his only fault: in every other respect Freeman is nearly perfection—draws well and quickly, runs hard, hunts the lowest scent."

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "that hound is just the thing for our flints and fallows; but I should like to see how he works. Will you sell him?"

"No," we replied; "but as you have taken such a fancy to Freeman, he can go back to your kennel when Dick Burton comes down for the ladies he has left here during this frost."

With many thanks the Squire took his leave, and at parting we said, "Now, bear in mind, we advise you not to breed from that hound, much as you will like him in his work, for although not noisy now, yet he will be so two years hence, if he lives so long."

The Squire gave us a look, which we understood by the twinkle of his eye as tantamount to teaching grandmammas or grandpapas how to suck eggs. Well, Freeman went to the Tedworth kennels, and soon after we received a letter from the Squire, eulogizing his performances, and concluding thus:—"Notwithstanding your caution, I like Freeman so much, that I have put him already to two of my

best brood bitches, rather shy of tongue, and I think the cross will succeed admirably."

Being in the habit of paying an annual visit to a very old and sincere friend, residing within five miles of Tedworth, a stanch supporter of Assheton Smith's hunt, we had an opportunity afterwards of seeing the sons and daughters of Freeman in the field as well as in the kennel, and the majority of them verified our prediction, turning out too loquacious by half. Handsome they all were—neat as new pins, especially the ladies, to each of whom the couplet might be applied—

> "If to her share some trifling errors fall,
> Look at her *form* and you forget them all."

Such appeared to be the Squire's opinion, and he would not then admit he had committed an error in judgment by breeding from a hound too free with his tongue; although some few years after, when out of temper with one of Freeman's progeny, the confession escaped his lips, "Confound that Freeman!" The Squire of Tedworth, or, as he was very appropriately called in that country by the lower orders, "the hard gentleman," from his hard riding and contempt of falls, was very partial to our pack, and the list of his hounds, published by Mr. Delmè Ratcliffe in his book entitled "The Noble Science," in the year 1838, shows that he had in kennel at that time no less than thirty-seven couples got by our hounds. Freeman, it is true, was not exactly of our sort, his father coming from another kennel, but he was bred and educated in our own. Our sort were not remark-

able for being free with their tongues. Packs of fox-hounds vary very much in this respect, some possessing deep sonorous notes, but claiming, as we think, a cross with harrier blood at some remote period; others are squeakers only, so light of tongue that there is no music in their cry. This cannot be called a fault, since they do speak as loudly as they can to a scent. In bygone times the music of the pack claimed more attention than it does in these fast days. Old Gervase Markham gives us some curious information on this point, thus: "If you would have your kennell for sweetnesse of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogges that have deepe solemne mouthes, and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, beere the base in consort, then a double number of roaring and loud-ringing mouthes, which must beere the counter-tenor, then some hollow plaine sweete mouthes, which must beere the meane or middle parte; and so with these three parts of musicke, you shall make your cry perfect; and herein you shall observe that these hounds thus mixt do run just and even together, and not hang off loose one from another, which is the vilest sight that may be; and you shall understand that this composition is but to bee made of the largest and swiftest deep-mouthed dog, the slowest middle-sized dog, and the shorter-legd slender dog. Amongst these you cast in a couple or two of small-singing beagles, which as small trebles may warble amongst them; the cry will be a great deal the more sweeter." "If you would have your kennell for loudness of mouthe, you shall

not then choose the hollow deepe mouthe, but the loud clanging mouthe, which spendeth freely and sharply, and as it were redoubleth in the utterance; and if you mix with them the mouthe that roareth, and the mouthe that whyneth, the cry will be both the louder and the smarter; and the hounds are for the most part of the middle size, neither extreme tall, nor extreme deepe flewed, such as for the most part your Shropshire and Worcestershire dogs are; and the more equally you compound these mouthes, having as many roarers as spenders, and as many whyners as of either of the others, the louder and pleasanter your cry will be, especially if it be in sounding tall woods, or under the echo of rocks."

This advice as to the compilation of a musical lot of hounds may be of service to any new master of hounds.

CHAPTER XVI.

"A cry more tuneable
Was never halloo'd to, nor cheered with horn."

Fashion of the day not in favour of music—Pace only thought of—Distinction between a mute and light tongue—Peculiar instinct in drawing—Deputy—The late Mr. Codrington on gorse coverts—Opening on the drag—Too much bow-wowing reprehensible—How to convert harriers into foxhounds—A veritable fact—Treeing a martin—A narrow escape—The run home—Qualities in foxhounds—Cardinal points—Long and hard days occasionally of service.

In these latter days Gervase Markham's suggestions as to the cry of hounds, or the harmonious blendings of sweet and loud voices to the pack, are very little, if at all considered, and the system of foxhunting now in fashion is antagonistic to them. *Dum hec vitia vitant in contraria current.* Fearful of running into one extremity, masters of hounds and huntsmen rush into the other, and so long as pace is everything and hunting nothing, foxhounds will be nearly as mute as fish. Hark, halloa! toot—toot—toot!—gone away!—found! forward!—and with cracking of whips and wild screeches, hounds are driven off their noses, and ready to fly anywhere with a scent or without it; in fact, they are taught to run at a scent, instead of

being allowed to carry it with them ; and were it not for cub-hunting and an occasional woodland day during the season, when they must hunt, they would trust more to their ears and eyes than their noses. It is a nice point to determine how much tongue hounds may give without being really what we call noisy.

Fast men do not care a rap about the melody of a pack of foxhounds, and such would be of little consequence to them, provided they could get a good start for a quick burst. Genuine foxhunters, however, delight in a full chorus, and they are right, for more reasons than one. There is something cheering and exhilarating in the cry of hounds ; even the horses we ride are wonderfully excited by it, and from this very excitement strain all their nerves to keep near them.

"Me other joys invite,
The horn sonorous calls, the pack awak'd,
Their matins chaunt, nor brook my long delay.
My courser hears their voice ; see there, with ears
And tail erect, neighing he paws the ground ;
Fierce rapture kindles in his red'ning eyes,
And boils in every vein."

When running in large coverts, how are we to know their whereabouts, except by that cry, particularly in windy weather, and when sometimes giving us the slip out of them, what else have we to guide us in the direction they have taken ? A light-tongued—we don't mean a mute hound—may find his fox, if wide of the pack, and be off and away with him before the others could hear him, and it does not necessarily follow that this

hound must be a skirter because at a distance from his fellows. Some possess a peculiar instinct in directing them at once to the kennel of a fox, and will go straight to it, when the pack may be drawing another part of the covert, which the huntsman might consider the most likely ground to find his game; and this peculiarity is not the result of age and experience, as may be supposed. We have known young hounds even in their first season thus gifted, and one in his second season remarkable for the manner in which he drew for his game. When the pack were dashing into the stuff, this dog trotted up the drive, testing the several meuses leading into it by smelling the twigs, without putting his nose to the ground, and if satisfied that a fox had passed, he generally threw his tongue once or twice, and then went rapidly up to the fox's kennel without again speaking, until he had roused him, of which he gave us full notice, the rest of the pack flying to him like lightning; for Deputy never spoke falsely. This hound, as he grew older, became so thoroughly *au fait* at this business, that if convinced no fox was in the covert, he would come back to us, and look up in our face with an expression of disappointment, as much as to say, "It's no use trying more, master, there is no fox here;" and we never found Deputy wrong in his decision.

The late Mr. Codrington, a master of great celebrity in his day, used to say, that by drawing his hounds round a gorse-covert, he could tell whether it contained a fox or not; and generally

speaking, there is almost a certainty in finding, where hounds are eager in drawing.

We have seen in the West of England a pack of foxhounds opening as freely upon the stale drag of a fox as harriers on the trail of a hare; but this sort of thing does not accord with our ideas about foxhunting—in short, we should draft such hounds as these, considering them as babblers. It is very agreeable news to be told, when looking for a fox, that he has been and may be somewhere in the neighbourhood, but much more satisfactory that he is positively in the covert you are drawing. There is no dependence to be placed on drag-hunters, since the fox they are talking about may have passed, it is true, through the covert late at night, or early in the morning, but he may be at that time miles away. On the other hand, when highly-bred and well-educated hounds throw their tongues on a drag, we may rest assured he is within a quarter of a mile of them. There is also another very great objection to drag-hunters, especially in a woodland country, whilst drawing *down wind*—sometimes an unavoidable necessity—the fox will be moving a long time before the hounds reach his kennel; and although they may be hunting him all day, there is little chance of their getting on much better terms with a wide-awake old traveller. Even with harriers, much *bow-wowing* on the trail of a hare is very objectionable, but quite inconsistent with the proper working of a pack of foxhounds. We like to hear a jolly good chorus of musical tongues, as much as any jolly old foxhunter of the

present or past time, when a fox is first found on a fair scenting day, or afterwards in full chase, when the scent will admit of it; and we quite agree with "Dryasdust," that this should be attended to in breeding foxhounds as well as other qualifications, which could easily be effected by putting dams of light tongues to sires of deep or heavy ones; we don't mean noisy hounds.

A short time since we heard of a curious mode adopted by a master of harriers to convert his currant-jelly dogs into foxhounds, and coming from an authentic source, we have every confidence in its truthfulness. Hares being more scarce than foxes in that part of the principality, it was resolved and carried unanimously by the members of the hunt, to fly, or have a fling, at the more fashionable pursuit, and it being then late in the season, and no time to be lost in blooding the pack to their new game, a fox was trapped, killed, and *skinned*, ready for eating—the naked carcase dragged across country by a man on foot, and the hounds laid on the scent of it. Whether with that of aniseed or other odoriferous oil anointed, whether stuffed with sage and onions to impart a higher flavour, or peppered and salted, our deponent sayeth not, but the drag proved sufficiently enticing, and the pack went at it furiously, to the great delight of the master and his supporters, for some two or three miles, until they overtook the aforesaid carcase thrown down upon the ground; while the dragsman, becoming alarmed at the great outcry in his rear, had quitted *terra firma* for a more secure position in a tree. On the

master reaching the spot with two of his first-flight men, where some of the hounds were still rolling on the ground, man and fox had disappeared.

"Halloa!" quoth the master, "here's a go! they have eaten the fox, of course, as I see part of his head sticking out from Jowler's jaws; but what's become of Jack Martin?"

"Eaten him, too, I suppose," said Tom Harkaway, laughing. "Hungry enough to eat a horse, old fellow, as you have given them no victuals for two days past. But hark! hark! I hear the cry of some hounds forward still—crossed the line of another fox—come on!" and away goes Harkaway, full tilt, laughing and screeching, with the *posse comitatus* in close attendance for nearly a mile, where the missing hounds were found, baying round a stunted oak.

"Ha! ha! ha!" cried Tom, almost bursting with laughter. "Treed their Martin, by jingo! after eating their fox! Ho! ho! ho! This is a go, indeed! Halloa, Jack, what d'ye do up there?"

"Too glad to get there, sir, for 'twere a near thing, as that red devil of a dog snapped at my trews as I were climbing up the tree, and tore a bit off of 'em."

"Well, never mind, Jack, a miss is as good as a mile; and as you stink as much as the fox, get down whilst we take the hounds away, and I'll give you five shillings for another run."

"Not for five sovereigns, Squire Harkaway, would I have another run like this."

"Come, come, Jack, no nonsense; you ain't in a position to make terms, but to take those that are offered, being a prisoner of war, surrounded by your enemies. So now listen to my terms:—The master shall take the hounds away, and I'll give you twenty minutes' law, by which time you can reach home, without being tree'd again."

"It can't be done in the time, Squire."

"Yes it can, Jack; you can do two miles and a half within the twenty minutes, easily, so come down from the tree and be off, and I'll keep time for you honestly, or here you shall stay till midnight."

Jack, knowing the character of his customer, descended to *terra firma*, pocketed the five shillings tendered by Harkaway, and set off at full speed, reaching home about five minutes before the clamorous pack were yelling at his cottage door.

This may appear a funny method of entering hounds to a fox-scent, yet it is not altogether a novelty, since Beckford relates an anecdote of an old sportsman, a clergyman, also, who entered his young hounds first at a cat, "which he dragged along the ground for a mile or two," and it is but reasonable to suppose that the cat was first killed, and not dragged to death over the country; although probably not skinned. This is a novelty, and we do not imagine these harriers would have touched the dead carcase of this fox, much less have eaten it,

unless absolutely starved for the purpose, thoroughbred foxhounds, we know full well, having little inclination to break up their game unless killed by themselves. We have been dwelling perhaps too long upon the faults and vices of the pack, and it is now time we should say something about their good qualities.

We have before alluded to drawing covert as of primary importance, and we like to see hounds spreading wide, dashing quickly, though steadily from riot, through the coppice. Their movement in gorse will of course be much slower, and we know no surer test of a hound's courage than working through a three-year-old gorse-brake, backwards and forwards, after a short-running fox. The two next necessary qualifications or cardinal virtues are, stoutness of constitution and fineness of nose, without which no foxhound has any claim to perfection, perfect though he may be in symmetry of mould. In the present day few opportunities present themselves for testing the first sterling quality, and not many more for the second, our hours of meeting during the regular hunting season commencing about eleven o'clock, and terminating about four in the afternoon, thus allowing five hours for hounds being in work or chase, so that their power of endurance cannot be fairly ascertained. We are not, as must be apparent from former observations, an advocate for very long or hard days, and think when hounds have done their work properly, and killed their fox handsomely, after a run of say an hour and more, the next best

thing they can do is to be drawing home instead of drawing for another fox.

Nevertheless, long days and hard days are of the greatest possible consequence to masters of fox-hounds, as proving the stamina of which the pack is composed.

A hound may be able to hunt the lowest scent, but he ought to possess strength of constitution and muscular power to follow his nose throughout the longest days.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Upon some little eminence erect,
Fronting to the ruddy dawn ; its courts
On either hand, wide op'ning to receive
The sun's all-cheering beams."—SOMERVILLE.

Sites of kennels—New building preferable to old—Ancient mansions—The Belvoir kennels the model for all others—Ground and aspect—Too small dimensions bad economy—The Author's ideas on the subject—Drainage—Hot air—Walls and palings—Seclusion—Supply of water—Tanks Hobson's choice—Other observations on the kennel—Warm lodging as necessary as good feeding—Wholesome meat indispensable to health.

BEFORE purchasing a bird, it is generally thought advisable to provide a cage to keep him in ; but in our discourses about hounds, we have assumed it as granted that a kennel had been already erected for their accommodation in the country taken by a new master ; such, however, not being invariably the case, and some old kennels being so badly placed, or in such a dilapidated condition, as to require a considerable outlay in repairs, we would offer the advice of one somewhat experienced in these matters, to any young aspirant for honours in " the noble science," never to make the attempt of patching up an old rickety building, whose loose walls have become a receptacle for vermin of all kinds—rats, mice, and creeping things supposed to enact the part of phlebotomists to animals of the canine species during the dog days. Those who

have tried the experiment of adding to old houses, on the score of economy, have generally found out their mistake; and it is far better, and cheaper also, when various alterations are contemplated in decaying edifices, to raze the whole at once to the ground and construct a new one in its place, for which the greater part of the old materials may be rendered available. Our ancestors had particular fancies about the sites for building houses, and we usually see old manorial residences located in low, we may add unhealthy, situations, although less exposed to the inclemencies of the weather; and it was one of their maxims that people ought to walk some distance to see the view, rather than behold it from the drawing-room windows—if view there were to be seen. We, however, entertain different opinions, believing there are very few situations under the hill, unless in gravelly soil, either dry or healthy—those especially surrounded by high trees, which not only prevent a proper circulation of air, but are productive of much damp during the autumnal and winter months.

Having gone through all the great kennels of England, save one, and visited numerous others of minor note, we are enabled, from actual observation of these various edifices, to form something like a correct plan of their requirements on a moderate scale. As to construction and conveniences, the Belvoir kennel stands conspicuous above all others; but the expenses of erection must have been very great, since nothing has been left undone which ought to be done, and everything

done in first-rate style, including the most perfect arrangements for the health and comfort of the beautiful pack of hounds dwelling within its walls. *Sed non cuivis homini contingit adiri Corinthum.* Men of moderate means must be content to view the castle as well as the kennels of Belvoir at a distance, although hints may be taken from their structure and reduced to a minimum scale. The other kennels we have visited were deficient in general arrangements, and the lodging-houses too low and small in many to be healthy. We have seen some in such low situations as to admit of water being conveyed through the courts, and where the current has been rapid, the hounds were not affected with kennel lameness. Stagnant pools near them, however, are most objectionable, and the drainage should be complete, to carry off quickly all the washings from the yards. As a general rule, the advice of Somerville should be followed in building new kennels.

If such situations are not to be found, the ground at least ought to be sound, or rendered so by artificial means of a thick layer of broken stones or coal-ashes, and the aspect south, with no large trees in front to interrupt a free currency of air throughout the whole buildings. Beckford's recommendation to build on a sufficiently extensive scale at first, is the best than can be offered, since after-additions too often mar the appearance of the whole edifice; and it is very bad economy to curtail the size of courts and lodging-rooms to save a few perches of walling or brick-work.

According to the number of hounds must be the dimensions of their sleeping apartments, but for a moderate establishment two rooms, eighteen feet long by sixteen wide, and ten feet high, and two smaller for lame or sick hounds on either side, sixteen feet deep by twelve wide. The courts must be of greater length, and in place of having the outer doors opening into the fields or park, we would prefer an entrance into a passage running up between the two kennels, as in the Belvoir plan, at the other end of which stands the feeding-house under the same roof, and into which hounds may be drawn through a side-door in the lodging-room, without being obliged to wait shivering in cold or wet weather whilst being fed, with no cover over their heads. The two larger we will call the hunting kennels; and by having two of moderate size, instead of one, the pack will always enter upon a dry floor every morning, which is of great consequence, damp being always productive of rheumatism and mange, as well as other maladies to which dogs are subject. To prevent this, the flooring also of the dormitories ought to be of brick, and the inside walls lined with the same material, if not entirely built with it; and for partitions between lodging-rooms a single brick is quite sufficient. It signifies little what the flooring of the outer courts may be, whether of stone pennant or concrete, provided they are frost-proof, and so laid with a sufficient fall to the centre that no water can stand upon them. We say fall to the centre, because hounds are less liable to

slip up when the pavement is thus pitched, and the water is drawn off more quickly than by a long slope, however steep.

At the back of the kennel, on one side, stands the boiling-house, from which a flue may be carried into the wall of the dormitory, to afford greater warmth to the hounds after hunting; and this same kennel may be appropriated to the use of the entry after the season, unless a separate lodging is prepared for them, with a greenyard attached to it on the western side; and the harem may be placed in any convenient position by itself, unconnected with the building and the courts, which may consist partly of grass and flagging, being sufficiently capacious to admit of free circulation of air. The outside walls should be constructed of stone to the height of five feet only, and palings placed upon them overhanging the wall, so that a hound cannot stand upon it. This precaution is necessary to prevent the hounds coming in contact with strange dogs, or being excited by passing objects. For this reason the spot selected for the site of a kennel cannot be too secluded away from town and villages, and not near any highways.

We have already recommended good old Irish or Scotch oatmeal as the best, and we may add the cheapest, food for foxhounds, or any other dogs, boiled for an hour, until it becomes as thick as a suet-pudding; and to prevent its turning sour, a cooler of slate, or of well-seasoned elm board, should be prepared for its reception, when taken

out of the boiler, and placed in a cool place outside the boiling-house. There ought to be a separate boiler for meal, sufficiently capacious to hold pudding for two days' consumption, and another for flesh, both being of cast iron. Those of copper or brass cannot be safely used in a kennel, where feeders are not like men-cooks, very particular as to the cleanliness of their culinary utensils. A good supply of water is indispensable to keep everything in a sanitary condition. In high situations, springs of fresh water are not always to be found, and if found, cannot be perhaps appropriated to the sole use of one individual. Wells also in some localities are not to be depended upon, so that we must have recourse to tanks and cisterns, supplied by rain-water from the roofs of the houses; and many are the districts within our knowledge which look to the clouds as their only reservoirs of water. To those who enjoy the blessings of pure springs, the runnings of houses must appear most objectionable and unwholesome, yet such is not the case where the cisterns are large and deep. The water, although descending with many impurities, purifies itself, and becomes clear as crystal, although retaining a sooty taste, disagreeable to the palate. Strange to say, it is not consequently soft water, but requires soda to boil vegetables with or make tea. Where this most necessary of all the necessaries of life cannot be obtained from the spring-head, or drawn up from the bowels of the earth, we must submit to Hobson's choice—*that* or *none;* and thousands are

too glad to get it, a thunderstorm in hot weather proving to them a Godsend in a dry season, when a fearful fathoming of tanks is commenced, to ascertain how many inches of the precious fluid yet remain before the next downfall of rain is expected. For the water-troughs in the kennel, slate is the best and most easily kept clean, iron next, stone and wood last. These ought to be placed about eighteen inches above the floor or flags, with a plug-hole at the bottom, standing over the drain, and fresh water added every morning.

To keep the lodging-houses clean, access must be free for the hounds into the outer courts, either by the door being left partly open, or through an aperture in the centre of it—a movable panel suspended by a hinge from above, to turn either way. In hot weather it is preferable to leave the doors quite open during the night. All the posts of doors through which hounds have to pass should be rounded, to prevent injury to their stifles. The frame of the sleeping-benches should be made of red deal, standing upon legs of oak, two feet high from the floor, and spars of deal three inches wide by one and a half in thickness, four or five of these joined together movable—not nailed to the frame —so that they may be all taken off by the feeder when the litter is taken up in the morning; and if any are wet, they can thus be easily dried in the sun or before the boiling-house fire. The distance between the spars must not exceed one inch and a half. We object to the benches being fastened to the wall for two reasons: the hounds will be

always contending for the warmest place, and in scrambling over each other, fighting must follow, and some be knocked over on the floor; and unless heated by flues, walls are generally very retentive of moisture, and, consequently, productive of rheumatism. The position of the benches should be such as to admit of two hounds passing each other by their sides all the way round, and a wide spar or board nailed from leg to leg, to prevent them attempting to get underneath. The window of the lodging-rooms should be of glass—not mere lattice-work—and made to open and shut, like those in conservatories, from top to bottom, so that in hot weather they may be kept quite open, to admit freely

"The nitrous air, and purifying breeze,"

and entirely closed at night during the hunting season. It is an error to suppose horses and hounds are able to contend with the cold wintry elements without, because they are kept in cold stables or kennels. Such is not the case; but quite the reverse. Warm lodging is as necessary as good feeding to keep animals of all kinds in good condition; and this fact has now become so thoroughly patent to farmers and graziers, that buildings for cattle are more insisted upon than barns to store their corn in. Weather permitting, we know there is nothing more conducive to health than a free circulation of air through our own sleeping apartments; but experience has also taught us that a cold chilling night wind is neither good for man nor beast. To add to the warmth of the lodging-houses, the roof should be constructed of reed, or

what is commonly called haulm, which has likewise the advantage of being more cool in the summer than slate tiles, although the latter are more sightly to the eye. But thatch, when properly laid on, and in sufficient thickness, by a clever thatcher, has not only a very neat appearance, but will endure many years. When moss-grown, also, it admits of being shaved down, presenting a renovated appearance. The only objection that can be raised to thatch is, that it may afford lodging for rats and mice, as the rooms below do for foxhounds. Access, however, to the eaves of the roof by these vermin may be easily cut off by a sloping ledge of half-inch board, fixed against the walls all round.

Having mentioned old oatmeal as the best and most nutritious of farinaceous food for dogs of all descriptions which have hard work to undergo, we must add a few words respecting the meat and broth which must be added thereto. It has been said, but very falsely, that "anything is good enough for dogs." We say nothing is too good for sporting dogs, if they are to be kept in first-rate condition. Bad flesh of any kind, whether of horse, bullock, calf, or sheep, which have died from disease, must strike any man of common sense as not likely to contribute to the strength or healthy secretions of any dog, and particularly unfitted for foxhounds, which undergo such an immensity of fatigue and work during their season. It is therefore necessary that the master should be very particular as to what meat is consigned to the flesh-pot.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Enjoyable duties of huntsmen—Intellect and physical abilities requisite—First-rate horsemen—Heavy *versus* light weights—Power in the saddle—Honesty and sobriety—Good temper—The whip too much used—Feeding time—Things hastily done, badly done—Even condition of the pack proof of good kennel management—Dainty feeders—System of the Author.

Of all occupations under the sun, we consider that of huntsman to a pack of hounds the most enjoyable—for a man in that station of life, we ought, perhaps, to have added, supposing he has adopted the profession from natural inclination and love of the sport; since we have known some who have regarded their office in a business point of view only. We are now, however, only alluding to those whose heart and hand are alike engaged in the line of life they have chosen from boyhood of their own free will; and, to succeed, they must possess also intelligence and intellect above the common order. The duties of a huntsman are various, all requiring exercise of mind and energy of action. So long as he has played a second part as whipper-in, he was under authority; sometimes, it is true, thrown upon his own resources, in cases of emergency, yet generally subservient to the orders and will of his superior in office. With the horn at his saddle-bow, "a change has come o'er the spirit of his dream"—a dream now realized.

He must think and act for himself, and he will find more than sufficient opportunities for exhibiting the very best talents he may be endowed with. To a certain extent he has been initiated into the mysteries of the science, and cannot have passed through his ordeal as whipper-in without observing the acts and deeds of his predecessor—how he has hunted and handled his pack. But looking on at others playing a game of cricket is a very different affair to playing it yourself. You may see how it is done, but when the bat is placed in your own hands, you will make the discovery that theory is not practice. Besides which, the duties of a whipper-in vary much from those of a huntsman. These, however, we may have occasion to notice in their proper place.

As to physical abilities, a strong constitution is needful to enable any man to undergo the hardships of hunting a pack of foxhounds. Setting aside the wear and tear of every-day life during the season, through all kinds of weather, casualties still occur, even to the best rider—falls, knockings about, hard blows, perhaps a broken collar-bone or ribs, which will prove of what stamina the corporeal is composed. To be always with his hounds, he must be a first-rate horseman; not a bold, reckless rider; and as to weight, we think twelve or thirteen stone in the saddle quite as likely to hold his own over a stiff vale country as one under. Big fences more often obstruct light weights and light-made horses than those of the contrary calibre or stamp. A little horse, to be always taking high

leaps, which he must do to get clear of strong blackthorn or other thick hedges, will soon have the "puff" taken out of him. In short, he is always in difficulties from violent exertions; whilst the heavy weights work their way through all opposition with comparative ease. Light weights are also more inclined to take liberties with their horses than men of more robust frame, who know they must husband their resources as much as possible. We have had both heavy and light men as whippers-in, and always found the former could beat the latter on the same horses over an enclosed country. By heavy weights, we do not mean a lump of so much human flesh, but a muscular frame, stripped of all superfluities, without an ounce of flesh to spare—that is, a powerful man in the saddle—elastic, wiry, and agile, one who can assist the animal he is bestriding in difficulties, and hold him together when requisite.

More than once or twice we have heard the idea ridiculed, that the rider can assist or lift his horse, and it is true that we have very often seen the horse exercising supreme superiority over his master, carrying him where he likes, and doing just as it pleases him; but in these cases the rider has been over-matched, without sufficient muscular power to regulate his horse's action; a little man mounted on a fifteen-stone hunter always reminding one of a tomtit on a leg of beef.

Having alluded to the physical, we must now treat of mental power and other qualifications necessary to constitute a perfect master of the science.

Perhaps it may be considered that the power of mind ought to take precedence of that of body, and in human life, intellect ranks first. But were a huntsman the cleverest man in the world, and a bad rider, unable to keep with his hounds, all the other talents he might possess would be of little avail. It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful, and undoubtedly honesty in a huntsman or other head servant in an establishment, where much is entrusted to them, is of the utmost importance. Sober he must be, or his business would be neglected, and no amount of intelligence can compensate for that worst of all vices—drunkenness—the root from which spring so many evils. In the present generation, this vice is less prevalent amongst men of tolerable education, occupying trustworthy situations, than formerly. Hard drinking in any respectable class of society may be said to belong to the past, and swearing also. In our younger days, we have often seen men, ranking as gentlemen, as well as huntsmen and whippers-in, who indulged freely in potations before taking the field, and then, as it is called, "riding like the devil;" and being clever men, these vices in the latter were tolerated.

There is one other indispensable quality besides honesty and sobriety, of which a huntsman to foxhounds ought to be possessed—good temper. *Hic moderatur equos qui non moderatitur iræ*, is as true now as in the days of old Horace. Many can control their horses who give loose reins to their own passions; irrespective of the unpleasantry which

will arise between master and man, where the greatest cordiality should exist, when the latter is blest with an infirmity of temper, it is obvious that the well-being of the pack depends in a great measure upon a quiet, kindly disposition, combined with patience and forbearance. Animals generally, dogs particularly, will not attach themselves to men of harsh, violent tempers; they judge us as we judge them and our fellow-beings, by that most unerring index of the spirit breathing within—the eye. With what reluctance have we witnessed pointers and setters following and obeying a sulky, ill-conditioned brute of a keeper, who, upon resistance or misunderstanding his orders, would nearly flay them alive; and although huntsmen, by the rules and nature of their office, are not permitted to flog their hounds, and cannot positively be accused of showing bad temper in the field, we can tell by the manner of their dependants towards them the characters of the men, without examining their physiognomy. Beckford relates an instance of a huntsman who used to flog his hounds whilst at the feeding-troughs, quaintly remarking, that "he supposed if they did not get a bellyful one way they got it the other;" and in our days the whip is too frequently used, and without discrimination, in the kennel during the dinner hour, as well as at other times. There is too much hastiness and bustle, and by far too many hounds let in together to the feeding-court. They rush about over each other, chopping at their food like a lot of half-starved pigs, half-choking themselves in swallowing as much

as they can within the allotted time, somewhere about two or three minutes, in which they are considered to have filled their stomachs, or sufficiently so to keep them in tolerable condition. Then "pop goes the whip," instead of the "weasel," and the satisfied as well as unsatisfied are alike hustled away from the troughs out into the greenyard. Now this practice is bad and slovenly, and although adopted by huntsmen of high standing in large establishments, not less on that account deserving censure. It is done to save time; but what is done hastily can never be well done. The excuse condemns the act. More than five or six couples cannot be fed properly at the same time, and those should be drawn off first together which are light feeders, and have rather delicate appetites. The gluttons follow after, by whom the troughs will be quickly cleared. One of the greatest difficulties in kennel management is to maintain the entire pack in even condition, not some fat and others lean, and by this we know how to judge of a man's merits or demerits as kennel huntsman. Such knowledge cannot be acquired except by practical experience; and here a young huntsman will most probably find himself on slippery ground, since whippers-in are rarely admitted to the canine dining-room, where the feeder assists the huntsman. Some hounds require feeding twice a day on the daintiest food the boiling-house can produce, and, even then, can never be persuaded to eat enough to keep pace with their work. Others, if left to themselves, would eat too much, and thus, from over-depletion,

would not be equal to work. Our general practice was, to divide the daily allowance of the whole pack into two meals, never giving any except the poorest feeders the chance of a bellyful at one single meal; and by adopting this plan, we not only found our hounds could undergo the most severe work, but that they lived to a greater age than those in other kennels; and we were told, a short time ago, by a master of hounds who has handled the horn some ten years, that he had adopted our plan from his commencement as huntsman, and had continued it ever since with the most satisfactory results.

CHAPTER XIX.

HUNTSMEN AND WHIPPERS-IN.

Meal and meat—General practice of feeding opposed to the Author's —Cravings of hunger —Long abstinence injurious—Huntsmen in the field—Fine voice of secondary importance—More reliance on hounds' noses than huntsman's head—Knowledge of country—Line of foxes—Enterprising genius—Lifting hounds—Self-possession and decision—An eye to business—Beckford's opinion of huntsman and first whipper-in—Qualifications of the latter—Opportunities of assisting huntsman—Gone away!

A TOUCHY old gentleman, when asked by a friend his reason for doing an act rather at variance with the usages of genteel society, replied very testily, "I never give any explanation of my conduct, sir." We have no desire to follow this elderly gentleman's example by saying, *stet pro ratione voluntas*. And as the observations we are led to make on hunting and system of kennel are intended to convey instruction to the uninitiated, the mainspring of our actions must be revealed and explained. In our last paper, the practice of feeding hounds, or any other dogs, twice instead of once only a day, was recommended from long experience of its advantage over the common treatment. In a state of nature, the carnivori make but one meal in the twenty-four hours, which, consisting of raw flesh and bones, requires rest and several hours for digestion. They prey at night,

and remain passive in their dens or lairs throughout the day. Moreover, except when ravenous from long abstinence, they rarely glut themselves with food. The fox, which affords us so much amusement, is a light feeder, although a great depredator, and we know when, perchance, he gets into the poultry-house that he will kill as long as he can catch, carrying all away and hiding them for future provision; and being such a bloodthirsty animal, we feel less compunction in his destruction than in that of the more timid deer and hare.

The practice in the majority of kennels is to feed the hounds about eleven o'clock, so that they have twenty-four hours without again tasting food —the hour of meeting being now at the same hour, and then it does not always follow that they do taste their fox. Supposing the day unpropitious, without this desired contingency to a run, the probability is, that six hours more will elapse before their return to kennel, making about thirty since the time of their daily feed on the previous day. Oatmeal is the strongest of all farinaceous food, but when diluted with the large quantity of broth generally used, cannot afford that amount of nutriment required for hounds or any other sporting dog in hard work, and therefore, during the hunting season, we divided the meal, giving in the morning more broth, and in the afternoon pudding mixed as thickly as possible with meat. We all know by experience the craving sensations inseparable from an ungratified appetite at our usual dinner hour. Few things in life ruffle a man's temper more than

to be kept waiting half-an-hour even for his accustomed meal. The fact is, that he is rather suffering at that time from irritability of stomach than infirmity of disposition. As "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," so dinner deferred maketh the stomach angry. Judging from our own feelings, we may imagine those of animals when similarly affected. By feeding our hounds with the substantial meal about 3 o'clock P.M., in moderate quantity, we calculated upon their not being so lean as others fed so much earlier in the day, and consequently better able to endure the fatigue of hard work, bearing in mind Beckford's observation, that a half-starved hound will never kill an afternoon fox.

Having mentioned some of the domestic duties of a huntsman in kennel management, we must now treat of his capabilities in the field—a wide field for the display of all the talents the cleverest man may possess; and since in all occupations or possessions the power of mind becomes conspicuous above others not so highly gifted, so will it prove in this instance. A huntsman must possess intellect of a superior order, or his career will never be a brilliant one. As to voice, we think that of secondary importance, or we might add, of no importance at all, although the tones well modulated ever fall pleasantly upon the ear. If hounds understand the meaning of their master's language it is enough; and as they are supposed to find a fox, there is no merit in his finding him for them. Knowledge of country is of very great importance

to a huntsman in directing him how to recover his lost fox, since the line taken by one is commonly followed by another, wind permitting. Instead of this knowledge, if transferred to a new country, the young huntsman must place more reliance upon his own head and his hounds' noses—above all, the latter, and we think better by far of such a beginning, teaching him the first and greatest lesson he can be taught—reliance upon his hounds as his surest guide through difficulties. Knowledge of country may afterwards be of service to him, when he has learnt to depend upon his hounds.

In the present era of foxhunting, too much is expected from the genius and talents of the huntsman, which are supposed to be equal to all emergencies; and we have heard of and seen what are called "heaven-born huntsmen," but we must confess to a great disappointment in their performances. This appeared to us a misnomer, inasmuch as their distinguishing characteristic savoured more of earth than of the ethereal spirit—knowledge of foxes' earths and haunts, which is derived generally from experience and observation. These men are too much dependent upon their own enterprising genius to allow their hounds to do their work properly, and when at fault, or hunting too slowly to please them, they are lifted forward to some covert, the favourite resort of foxes, where it very frequently happens that instead of getting upon the line or recovering their hunted fox, a fresh one is roused up, and the "heaven-born huntsman" takes the credit of having displayed his talent in a

very meritorious manner, whereas he has just made a hash of it—done what a steadier man would have avoided.

Two of the most necessary qualifications in a huntsman to foxhounds are self-possession and decision; he should never be in a hurry, although, when emergencies arise, quick in deciding how to act. A good eye and ear are also indispensables, to see, when hounds are running, how far the leading couples have carried the scent; and the organ of hearing perfect, to detect what is going on in covert when he cannot avail himself of his eyesight. A fine ear reveals to him at once whether his hounds are running a stale or fresh scent; and he can also tell how near they may be to their fox, with as much certainty as if he were an eye-witness of their doings. Although the observed of all observers, he should never be thinking of what his field may be thinking or saying about himself; regarding only his hounds and his business—*et totus in illis*—he should shut his ears to all other things; and we do not think the master should ever interfere with him or dictate in the field, which would destroy his self-confidence. Beckford has said that he would prefer a first-rate whipper-in and a second-class huntsman, as more likely to afford sport; and we quite agree with him, that a stupid whipper-in is the greatest drawback to the efficient working of the pack, since upon him so much depends.

The first whipper-in may be said very often, if not always, to hold the trump card in his hand, if

he is a trump, and not an ignoramus. He must know well the hunted from a fresh fox, and if the pack divides, stop instantly those on the wrong scent; and by his quickness and cleverness in this matter depends the fortune of the day. This is an act thoroughly independent of the huntsman, who cannot hunt and rate hounds at the same time. Then he must be well acquainted with all the earths and drains in the country to which foxes generally resort; and when the hunted fox is evidently running for one of those unstopped, it is his business to get forward without instructions from the huntsman and prevent the fox gaining it before him, and, if quickly done, the first whipper-in has here the credit of killing his fox. He ought also to know the shortest way across country to any given point, and although at some times acting, as we have just before mentioned, quite independently of the huntsman, at others he must be obedient to his commands. A good temper is not so indispensable as in a huntsman, yet his infliction of punishment on the hounds, when running riot, should be tempered with justice and moderation. We like to see a man sparing of tongue, but vigorous in action,—one who will not be foolish enough to rate when he is unable to enforce obedience, since riotous hounds know as well as he does that they are un-come-at-able in high coppice of seven or eight years' growth, and therefore they will have their fun out, notwithstanding the most furious objurgations. A sensible whipper-in will wait patiently until the delinquents

are within reach of his lash, when emerging into shorter stuff, then he will pounce instantly upon them, with a blow first and a rate afterwards. It is not unlikely on this occasion that a little irritability of temper may be exhibited, which we regard as being very natural, provided the lash does fall upon the real culprit. A whipper-in has no right whatever to strike a hound in the presence of the huntsman, to whom he flies, as a matter of course, for protection; and if he loses his opportunity of punishing him when caught in the act, he must wait for another. He should also make himself acquainted with the different dispositions of the hounds, since for one a word of caution or rate will generally prove sufficient, while others may require a severe castigation; and we have known some from their youth addicted so much to evil practices, that they proved incorrigible.

That a first whipper-in is placed in a position where he has the opportunity of contributing very greatly to the sport of the day, admits of no doubt, but at the same time he must never attempt to take hold of the hounds so long as the huntsman is present; and we decidedly object to his helping to hunt them in covert—a loose practice encouraged by some huntsmen. Such interference should not be permitted—on the contrary, his voice should never be heard except in rating or turning straggling hounds to the pack, or in a view-halloa when the fox has broken covert. In short, his place is to be forward outside the covert, the second whipper-in being in

attendance on the huntsman. There is another practice adopted by huntsmen, which we cannot approve, although by it sometimes time may be gained in making a cast to allow the whipper-in to assist him, by holding half the pack in one direction whilst he is trying in another. This has been called a quick scientific way of doing business, but in our opinion, loose and unsportsmanlike. We like to see men and things in their right places, and the first whipper-in is certainly out of his place when he is assisting to hunt the pack in covert, or dividing them to recover the line of a hunted fox in the open. When hounds are running for a particular covert, and there can be no doubt as to the point the fox is making, the place of the first whipper-in is to get forward to the other side of that covert, there patiently to remain until the hounds enter it. There he will sit quietly on his horse awaiting the issue of events. One or two foxes may perhaps be seen by him stealing away from the wood-hedge, yet he moves not in his saddle, or appears by his indifferent look to have even noticed their departure. They are gone, and a smile only plays about his mouth. Presently there is some object upon which his eye becomes riveted, and his attention fixed, as if engrossing all his thoughts. He knows it at a glance to be the hunted fox, slowly leaving the wood-hedge, and casting one furtive lingering look behind: still not a muscle of his features moves, until the fox is lost to view beyond the next fence. Then the nature of

the man seems entirely changed. He is all energy and animation, scream succeeds scream, until the hounds come tearing through the covert to his well-known view-halloa. The victory over his beaten foe that day belongs to him, he knows, but he does not claim it.

CHAPTER XX.

Second Whipper-in — Natural talents for his profession—Place of second whip—His disposition—Implicit obedience to superiors—Master reflected in man—The Baronet and Parvenu—Old law of honour—Ink *vice* blood—Huntsmen in communion with gentlemen—Order of march to covert side and back—Huddling hounds together—Discipline too strict fails in its object—The late Squire of Tedworth and his pack—The *attaché* of the huntsman—Seeing not always believing — Drawing over foxes—Pugilist Jack and the last hound—Dismounted duties.

It has been said by some writers on foxhunting, who ought to have known better, that any boy who can crack a whip will suffice to fill the situation of second whipper-in ; we must differ with such authorities, *toto cælo*. Defend us from a boy who can just crack a whip as from an urchin with a penny pipe in his mouth ; no greater nuisance can befall a pack of hounds than a boy who fancies he must be continually flicking them with his lash, which he imagines is placed in his hands for that purpose. The lad who is to succeed in after-life as a whipper-in or huntsman must be born with a head upon his shoulders containing a full complement of brains, and ought to know when to strike a hound and when to let him alone, without being perpetually lectured about it. Every yokel taken from the plough-tail cannot be converted into a whipper-in, whether he will or no. Time and trouble are thrown away upon any but acute intelligent

lads, the sons of huntsmen or whippers-in, who have been bred up to the profession, and take to it kindly from childhood; although it does not invariably happen that the children of huntsmen are inclined to adopt their father's calling, or are fitted for it; but when they do so choose for themselves, like well-bred foxhounds, they require less trouble in breaking. There is a vulgar expression, peculiarly applicable to a sleepy lad, intended for this line: "he has not got it in him;" and if so, you cannot put it in him; neither birch nor whipcord would avail in this case. Knowledge of the noble science cannot be dunned into the boy's head like Latin and Greek, unless he is anxious to acquire it. We have tried many lads of respectable parentage, and although delighted at first with the idea of becoming whippers-in to a pack of foxhounds, yet we could not get on with them; some proved too hasty, some too slow, and others too stupid, to persevere with them; but they did very well for thistle-whipping, where they had the master's eye continually upon them in the open field, and were obliged to obey orders.

The place of the second whip to foxhounds is to be in attendance upon his superior at certain times, at others, be left to his own devices; and during cub-hunting, he may be amusing himself by cracking nuts instead of cracking his whip, whilst the hounds are running covert. Boys will be boys, and we must make some allowance for their frolics; but unless a lad has been well brought up at home, has naturally a good disposition, and is kind to animals,

it will be "love's labour lost" to attempt to make anything of him. Complete obedience, civility, and attention to his superiors, are the first lessons which ought to be impressed upon the mind of any youth intended for the service of gentlemen; and we quite agree with the remark we once heard expressed by an old foxhunter: "Show me the servant, and I will tell you the character of his master." Although perhaps little thought of or noticed in these times, there cannot be a more sure test of a servant's respectability—the master is reflected in the man.

We remember a scene, some years ago, between a baronet of sporting celebrity, both on the turf and in the field, and the groom of a *soi-disant* gentleman—in other words, one who had plenty of money to spend upon servants and horses, but knew little about the usages of good society. The baronet was picking his way quietly on his hunter's back through a dirty lane to the place of meeting, when this groom dashed by him at half-speed, bespattering him with mud from head to foot. Now, the baronet being very particular as to personal appearance, always dressing well, and being rather of a peppery disposition, became exceedingly irate at seeing his clean pink, and white buckskins dotted over with black spots, like a leopard-skin, through the insolence of this blackguard, and the more enraged when the fellow pulled up a short distance before him, looking back with a grin at the baronet's grotesque appearance.

"The name of your master?" demanded Sir L. G., riding up to him.

"I shan't tell it, unless asked in a civiler way," the groom replied.

"Then I will find it out, and horsewhip him instead of you, unless he discharges you instantly from his service for such outrageous behaviour."

The day proving unfavourable, our *novus homo* did not put in an appearance at the place of meeting, but the next morning a friend of the baronet's called upon him to request that the servant who had behaved so insolently the previous day might be discharged. Objections being raised to this proposal, Captain D——, on the part of the baronet, suggested the expediency of his naming a friend upon whom he might call to arrange preliminaries for a meeting as early as possible the following morning.

"What, sir!" exclaimed the astonished gentleman, "am I to be shot at because my servant happened to throw some mud over your friend in galloping up a road? I have had dirt thrown in my face when galloping after the hounds by those riding before me."

"Not unlikely, sir; but your servant did this purposely to insult my friend when there were no hounds running; and by his pulling his horse up immediately afterwards, there can be no doubt as to his object."

"I have my doubts about it, Captain D——, and I shall not discharge my man. Now, would you, in my case? As a soldier and a gentleman, I ask your candid opinion."

"A master is answerable for his servant's action

in such cases as these ; and I would not retain one in my service who could so misconduct himself. That would be my course of proceeding."

"Very well, Captain D——, then I will follow your suggestion." Thus the groom was discharged without the discharge of pistols—the usual mode of settling differences in those times, now happily discouraged and disallowed. In place of placing your antagonist on turf so many paces distant, to be shot at, you now put him in print, where you may pepper away at each other as long as it pleases both parties, with spilling of ink, not spilling of blood. The servants of well-bred gentlemen have been, and always will be, distinguished from the rude and crude by civility, and deference to their superiors. Huntsmen and whippers-in, by their vocation, are brought more immediately before the public, and in communion with gentlemen, than any other class of dependents, and we rarely see them spoilt by this indulgence, but the reverse. Their manners are greatly improved by it. A little personal vanity must be expected, and we rather like to see these men proud of their position, and the opportunity given them of being the chief contributors to the sport of the whole field.

On their way to the covert-side, the place of first whipper-in is in advance of the huntsman, and that of the second a considerable distance behind him, so far as to allow any hounds to fall back without molestation from his whipcord ; and it would add very much more to the comfort of the pack, if Jack were altogether out of sight. Whilst

thus travelling on their outward journey, and in coming home also, tired hounds should be allowed plenty of room to pick their way through sloppy roads or lanes in bad weather. We dislike to see hounds at any time huddled up together round their huntsman, like a flock of sheep penned in the corner of a field, by a dog snapping round them. When the entry have become steady, and are admitted into the pack, discipline of this kind is as injurious as unnecessary, since we have remarked that hounds kept in such strict order are more inclined to run riot than those treated with more confidence. The late Assheton Smith was, in this respect, the most trusting huntsman we have ever seen in the field, and we were often amused with the sudden change in the behaviour of his hounds on his arrival at the place of meeting. Whilst in charge of the kennel-huntsman and two whips they trotted along in a compact body, solemnly and demurely, not a hound venturing to step out of place; but no sooner did they catch sight of their master, or hear his voice, than, breaking loose from further restraint, like boys out of school, they rushed eagerly to meet him, jumping and playing round his horse, with other manifestations of excessive delight. The character of the hounds seemed changed in a moment, and as they moved off to draw covert, an independence of action was assumed totally at variance with their former deportment. They knew no whipper-in dare touch or control them in their huntsman's presence, to whom, however, they yielded that cheerful obedience so pleasing

to behold in all animals attached to a kind master, a word or wave of the hand being sufficient to recall or turn them in any direction.

The place of the second whipper-in, when hounds are drawing covert, is at the tail of the pack, to watch their proceedings, and if perfectly satisfied that any are running riot, to stop them directly; but he is not to be too hasty in his conclusions, and should be convinced by ocular demonstration, since a hound given occasionally to malpractices will be right sometimes. The huntsman's conduct at this time will be his best guide, to whom he is considered as an especial *attaché*, waiting generally his directions and orders. When he cheers all is right, and for that cheer the second whip must wait, as a rule, before taking upon himself to decide. Even seeing is not always believing. A hare may be running the same line as the fox, which we have often seen, and lookers-on would of course say they were running riot. We knew otherwise; but it is the huntsman only, or clever first whip, who could distinguish at a glance by the hound's manner whether they were right or wrong. Hounds should not be hurried when drawing covert, time and room being allowed them, or you will draw over many foxes in the course of the season on bad scenting days or windy weather. In thick sedgy underwood foxes will lie very close, and not move until nearly pushed out by the hounds. Whether they are judges of good scenting days, from the fact of their occasionally hunting down their game, we do not pretend to say,

although they certainly appear to possess this knowledge.

When being hunted, foxes as well as hares distinguish the distance between themselves and their pursuers, and if not pressed in the chase, seem to draw their conclusions that they may take liberties on such occasions by loitering on their course, or running back the foil. It is no unusual occurrence to see many foxes chopped before getting on their legs during the hunting season. We remember once in particular, when drawing a thick blackthorn brake, a hound, named Pugilist, by Mr. Osbaldiston's Pontiff, making a dead stand at a bush. Being a capital hound, as true as steel to a fox scent, we knew, of course, no other animal could be there. We stopped on our horse, waiting to see the issue. The hound stood for a second or two more, when, springing into the bush, he rolled the fox out of it on the other side, and before I could jump off my horse had killed him. This fox, save for Pugilist's perseverance in working about this thick stuff, when the other hounds had dashed forward, would have been drawn over; and it had been better to have so happened than die ignominiously without a run for his life. It, however, goes to show how very closely foxes will lie in gorse-brakes or very thick underwood; and therefore it is necessary to impress on the mind of the second whipper-in that he is to keep a respectful distance whilst hounds are drawing such places, and never interfere with them when they appear busy in any particular spot.

When the fox is found, the second whipper-in must keep as near the hounds as possible, still prepared to attend to any directions from the huntsman, with his ears well open to receive them. When the fox breaks covert, it is his business to bring on any tail-hounds that may remain behind. This duty is not perhaps, sometimes, a very agreeable one, yet, being indispensable, Jack must be content to perform it, and the quicker and better it is done, the more fun he will have by seeing the run out from beginning to end. If, however, it is done in a slovenly way, and some hounds still left in the covert, he will be sent back by the huntsman to collect them together and bring them on, which will throw Jack out of his anticipated amusement, and teach him a lesson which, if he is worth instruction, need not be repeated, that so long as a single hound remains in covert, when the pack have left it, he has no business out of it.

We have written enough to show that the task allotted to a second whipper-in is not such as can be performed by a boy who can merely crack a whip. He must be bred up to his profession from early youth, as assistant to the huntsman in and about the kennels, also an occasional helper in the stable, and to ride horses out to exercise, whereby he may acquire a good seat on horseback, as well as how to handle the reins, since the knowledge of hunting and managing hounds would be of little avail to him without the former qualifications. The dismounted duties of the whipper-in will depend upon the establishment. If not required to

help wash the hounds in kennel after they return from hunting, his business will be to clean and dress his own horse, which he may think rather a bore after a hard day, but this will afford him also a good lesson to distinguish between the use and abuse of the horses he has to ride. The more care he takes of them in the field, the less trouble will they give him in the stable.

CHAPTER XXI.

Second horseman—Few good riders to hounds—The first start—Different modes of crossing country—Genuine sportsmen—Seats in the saddle—Good riders and hard riders—The worst kind of fall—Anecdote of Jack Stevens—Riding down hill—Truth of the old triplet—How to take fences—"Experto crede"—Irish hunters—Jack and his Kilkenny friend—Going at water—The late Lord Kintore—Untrodden ground the safest—The horse and his rider—Must part company sometimes.

THE introduction of second horseman into the hunting-field originated, we believe, with the late Lord Sefton, who succeeded Mr. Meynell in the Quorn country, and for men of heavy weight the practice is not only defensible, but commendable, as affording great relief to their horses. A good second horseman, however, is as rare as a first-class whipper-in, for, like him, he must possess with other qualifications a knowledge of country, and the general line of foxes, which are necessary to enable him to nick in, as it is called, at the proper time with a fresh horse, when his master is in difficulties with a beaten one. There is an art in doing this effectually not to be attained by a lad just out of a racing-stable, or a common groom. He will also have to ride the run throughout, sometimes in the wake of his master, and ready to assist him when called for. The difference between heavy and light weights is not so great as

that between a perfect horseman and a bad rider, the latter being certain to beat his horse long before the former.

The art of riding to hounds is not to be learnt in a month or a season by every man who goes out hunting, or we should never behold those scenes in the field which so commonly meet the eye in the grazing districts, when out of such large numbers assembled at the place of meeting, so few are found who can live with hounds, even through a short sharp burst; and in a trying run fewer still. When the fox breaks covert, the great majority are so hurried and flurried that they scarcely know what they are about, rushing and pressing forward in a crowd, impatient for a good start, which, if perchance they get they cannot keep: the cause of this is that they have not served an apprenticeship to foxhunting in early youth, and do not, consequently, understand how to get to or live, as we call it, with hounds. Some, sailor-like, go at their fences right earnestly, and at any hound also which has the misfortune to be in their line, rasping away with loose reins, until brought down to mother earth. Others take a well-known sportsman for their guide, whom they will follow as long as able to do so, greatly to his annoyance, and perhaps detriment in case of a fall. The few knowing ones choose a line of their own, listening attentively to the cry of the pack whilst in covert, never far from them at any time, and ready for a start the moment they are away. These men have learnt by experience the business part of foxhunt-

ing, and never throw away a chance by coffee-housing under the wood-hedge after the first hound has thrown his tongue. This is the signal for him to be on the alert, with eyes and ears open to all that is now passing around him. He is not in a hurry or flurry, galloping up and down the drives, or larking over fences outside the covert; but creeping quietly about, shifting his position as the fox shifts his ground, and generally pretty sure of viewing him over the drive or across the first field from covert; when, and not before, his voice will be heard to some purpose. Neither is he in a hurry now that the pack are clear of the wood-hedge, and settling down on the scent; there is no restless impatience in his manner to be off and over them. He can afford to wait until they are fairly committed to the run; and then, keeping wide of them, right or left, according to the wind, and not alongside of the leading couples, which he knows is not his place, if it is that of the huntsman, but with his eye fixed upon them, so that he may pull up at the first check. He will know how far the hounds have carried the scent, and when, in the eagerness of the burst, they have overshot it, and turn his horse's head in the direction they incline to; in short, he is a thorough sportsman, one of that character to whom master and huntsman may look for assistance and support in difficulties.

As to a seat on horseback, there are *quot homines, tot sententiæ;* some prefer the military seat, others ride by balance; some by purchase, or clinging

tightly by thigh and leg to the saddle; some in long, others in short stirrups: every man rides, we conclude, as it suits him, or according to the instructions received in early youth, or later in life from a riding-master. The best and firmest, although perhaps not the most elegant, is that acquired by a self-taught boy on his pony, who will stick to the pigskin through kickings, rearings, swervings, and such-like devices to dislodge him. The balance seat we consider the most insecure, not only in the hunting-field but elsewhere. Well enough as long as his horse goes straight at fences, but should he swerve just before taking them, ten to one against the balance man keeping his equilibrium. We have noted many hard riders of this class,—good riders we cannot call them, since good riders and hard riders are by no means synonymous terms. We consider that may be the best sportsman who can keep his place in the field with the fewest falls; and we may go a step farther, by saying that the horse and his rider ought never to part company, except under very peculiar circumstances. The worst fall you can get is when going fast down hill your horse puts his foot into an old rut or rabbit-hole; a roll over is then the inevitable consequence, and if no bones are displaced you may consider yourself most fortunate.

An anecdote related of the once-celebrated Jack Stevens, whipper-in to the more celebrated Osbaldiston, occurs to us here, showing the dare-devil character of the man. He was seen riding fast down hill, over very uneven ground, dotted with large

mole-hills, on a horse having very rickety fore-legs, and whilst so doing, what think you was his occupation? Tying a lash to his whip, and the open blade of his pocket-knife between his teeth. The man who could perform such a feat as this, we may naturally conclude would stick at nothing. Just the sort of fellow to lead a forlorn hope or dash up to the cannon's mouth. Experienced foxhunters are agreed that there is no surer proof of courage than riding quick down hill, although, in our opinion, this act shows want of judgment and really good horsemanship, for what says the old triplet?—

Up the hill spare me,
Down the hill bear me,
On the flat never fear me.

There is often a deal of truth in these wise old saws, and in these three lines are condensed the best rules for riding to hounds. The forcing your horse against rising ground is the surest method of stopping him altogether, if in the least distressed, and hurrying him down the descent most likely to eventuate in a most calamitous cropper. The next most dangerous fall generally comes from going too fast at timber—a great mistake—or riding at a swinging gate, which we have seen men do to show their contempt of danger. Some horses have rather a fancy for gate-jumping; but they require to be left to their own discretion how to take them, which they will do by shortening sail and gathering themselves together for the spring. In fact, all animals of the jumping order slacken their pace before taking their leap—deer particularly,

which go bounding along in their course, and might be expected to go at obstacles in the same manner, yet, having watched them often, we have invariably noticed that, unless very closely pursued, they would break into a trot, and sometimes clear high leaps standing. Taking a lesson from them, we invariably draw the rein when approaching any fence, and to this caution we attribute our encountering so very few serious accidents during a long hunting career. Some of your raspers and thrusters may think this a slow mode of doing business, and that hounds would run us out of sight and hearing from losing so much time. Experience led us to pursue this plan, as enabling us to see more of a run than those who adopted the contrary one; and in our younger days we were quite as fond of jumping as hunting. When, however, we took to the horn, our whole attention was given to the hounds, regarding fences only as so many impediments in our way, irrespective of which, we made the discovery that strong fences stopped hounds as much as horses, and that we could easily keep our place with them if well placed at starting. Hounds cannot beat a well-bred horse, with a workman on his back, through enclosures, although they may and will run away from them over open downs with a good scent. Irish horses, from their particular education, having been accustomed when young to follow their breaker over fences with a long rein, which enables them to disport themselves as most convenient, are generally found to be the best standing leapers; and we remember a little event between

our second whipper-in and a thorough-bred Irish hunter which we had recently purchased for his riding. Jack was bringing along a hound or two left behind in covert, and pressing forward to join us in the chase, when, on jumping into an enclosure, he found himself so far pounded that the only means of exit lay over a five-barred gate, at which some two or three of the field were posted, trying hastily to break the lock.

"Now, gentlemen, if you please," cried Jack, "master will be wanting me up with the pack, and if you can't manage the gate, let me have a go at it."

"Come on, then," they said, making room for him, and expecting he would, by breaking the top-bar, let them through easily.

Jack, not needing a second invitation, gave the Irish horse a dig with his spur, thinking he would take it like other horses, but he reckoned without his host on this occasion; the Irisher went straight enough at first, but, just as he reached the gate, he turned short under it, sending Jack clean out of the pigskin and over the top-bar; then, raising himself on his hind-legs, vaulted over to join his rider. On Jack's being thrown, a loud laugh was raised by those on the wrong side at Jack's expense, who, on picking himself up, said, "The laugh's on my side now, gentlemen," and, raising his cap, wished them "Good-bye!"

We cannot say this way of negotiating timber was a very desirable or pleasant one; but this horse, having been so instructed, would always take

it in this way, and Jack, being once made acquainted with the trick, they became inseparable friends ever after.

Some men have an idea that horses must be sent with a certain impetus at all fences alike, and, so far from slackening their pace when nearing them, increase that impetus by the spur ; yet it is quite evident that a horse so hurried cannot measure his distance ; and, if making a mistake on taking off, a rattling fall will be the consequence, which will cause greater delay than if the horse had been ridden at it more leisurely, enabling him to land safely on the other side. We think that a little more powder may be added when going at water ; but even then we should prefer taking it with a brisk trot rather than at full speed. We remember seeing three first-flight men, one of whom was the late Lord Kintore, riding furiously at a brook, each anxious to get the lead, when the first horse, swerving on the brink, being so close in the pace, all three went under water. The most puzzling of all aquatic adventures of this sort is when the banks are flooded to some extent on both sides of the stream ; and even then we have seen some men foolhardy enough to gallop through it, supposing their horses could distinguish where to take off.

Now, if there is one thing more particularly to be attended to in foxhunting, it is the state of the ground from which your horse takes his spring ; never regard the lowest place in the fence, nor that where the bounds have been lately mended. Fresh ground is always the most safe where there

are no foot-marks; and, although the quickset may be higher at this point, there is less risk of a misadventure. A good rider to hounds has no sooner cleared one fence than his eye is cast forward to see his best way over the next, and, having made up his mind on this point, he will not deviate from his line. At brooks especially, the first horse has always the best chance. In this case it is dangerous to follow a leader. But of all the disagreeables in a foxchase, peaty water meadows, with a brook in the middle, are the worst to be encountered. As a general rule, the horse and his rider ought to be inseparable; yet are there exceptional cases, in some of which they must of necessity dissolve partnership, and that, too, for mutual benefit and convenience. The towing-path under the arch of a canal is one place where a man must dismount at once and lead his horse, unless he chooses to run the risk of having his brains knocked out. The wooden drawbridge over it, with a gate at both ends, and no room to take off, is another. A drop leap into a deep stony lane is better accomplished by leading down than riding down into it; eleven or twelve stone on your hunter's back being more likely to shatter his fore-legs than to save them; to say nothing of a cropper to yourself, with a bloody nose, and broken knees to your horse, which will detract from his value ever afterwards. We have come to park-palings in the course of a run, over which the boughs of trees were hanging so low and stiffly, that riding at them was an impossibility, unless you were anxious to incur the fate of

Absalom. The parting between horse and man being imperative, we considered it the wisest and quickest plan to dismount instantly, do what we could in breaking the top palings, and leading our horse over, to contend with the rest of the timber as he best could.

CHAPTER XXII.

Old hunters and young riders—Vacating the pigskin sometimes a voluntary act—With stirrups or without them—Riding for sale—The mount by a friend the reverse of friendly—Rule as to kickers in the field—Buck-jumpers—Two strings to your bow—Snaffle bridle—Martingales—Breastplate—Unnecessary gear—Spurs—Their use and abuse—The Author's objection to them—Hunting costume—Jack-boots—The old top—The cap and hat—Colour of coat—The spare shoe—Eau de vie—Old Meynell's cordial—Contents of waistcoat-pocket.

THE best advice we can offer to a young aspirant for honours in the hunting-field is to purchase a well-made hunter or hunters, which will give him a more experimental and useful lesson in the art of riding to hounds than we can communicate by the pen. The older they are the cheaper they will be, and if screws, no matter; they will teach you in a month that which we might fail to impress upon your mind in twelve months. An old stiff-jointed hunter will have things his own way, and if you attempt to force him out of it woe betides you. Give him his head without whip or spur, and you will find him a trustworthy friend. Knock him about the head and ears, and he will play the devil with you. The greatest mistake a man can make is to suppose that his horse will go for a fall, as his master does sometimes, to get grassed on the other side of a fence. An old hunter will never go for a fall until there is no go left in him. Young riders

on young horses must expect to get falls, and plenty of them; and as there is said to be some method even in madness, so is there some art in knowing how to fall well, when fall you must. So long as a chance remains of holding him together, the pigskin should not be abandoned, but when that chance is gone, by your horse's fore-legs getting into the ditch on the other side, throw yourself clear of him, to avoid a pommelling.

Huntsmen and whippers-in, when going at a dangerous place, or expecting a ducking, throw their stirrups across their horse's withers; and having often adopted this practice, we can recommend it as advisable on particular occasions, to prevent entanglement. Stirrups are no doubt a very necessary and luxurious appendage to a saddle, since it is not very pleasant to have your legs dangling about your horse's sides. Moreover, to ride by gripe only any long distance occasions great strain upon the muscles of the thighs and legs; still, a good horseman ought to be able to ride without stirrups as well as with them. Losing shoes is of more frequent occurrence than losing stirrups, yet on crashing through a thick bullfinch or blackthorn hedge, you may be nearly torn out of the saddle and one of the stirrups left behind, which, in a run, there is no time to recover. Some men, "to one thing constant never," are continually chopping and changing their horses—like some young ladies, fond of new faces. Others buy young horses to make them, for those who can afford to give high prices for made hunters; but unless really

in want of the needful, the best rule is never to part with a horse that suits you. More than half the enjoyment of a good run depends upon being carried comfortably throughout it. Horses, like hounds, have all their peculiar dispositions, and there is no pleasure riding a fiery-tempered, hard-pulling brute, who will have everything his own way.

We were once offered a mount by a friend upon what he was pleased to call a first-rate hunter, in the shape of a tall, strong animal, standing over sixteen hands, with head and tail well up, and the action of a gentleman's London cab-horse. On beholding the hounds, every organ and muscle of his brute body was set in motion. Ears cocked up; nostrils dilated; eyes ready to come out of their sockets; teeth intent on eating the bit, if feasible; tremblings in every limb, with circumvolutions and pawings, ominous of a restless, ungovernable brute within his huge carcase. Thinks I to myself, a pretty beginning for a quiet elderly gentleman, desirous of looking over the pack first, and following them afterwards with an eye to business. Meanwhile my friend sat lounging in his saddle, seemingly as much at ease as when reclining in his side-padded arm-chair after dinner. Ever and anon we detected a mischievous glance of his eye directed towards the *pirouetting*, curvetting monster, upon which, from sheer malice prepense, or murderous intentions, we believe he had mounted us. Now, it was sufficiently vexatious for a *quondam* "M. F. H." to be so placed as to be precluded

the gratification of inspecting the hounds for fear of his steed rushing in amongst them; but we felt also exceedingly uncomfortable in our exalted position, from which the animal we were bestriding appeared resolved to dislodge us as quickly as possible. Some men have a fancy for prancing horses, to show off their horsemanship before ladies, and this may do very well in Rotten Row, although rather out of place at a meeting of foxhunters, where such exhibitions do not find favour. It is an established rule in the hunting-field, that no man has a right to bring a kicking or riotous horse into a crowd of others, or near the hounds. The risks men encounter in the chase are great enough without being subjected to the chance of having their legs broken by a bad-tempered brute at the covert-side. Finding it impossible to keep our Highflyer in decent order, we were obliged to make ourselves scarce, and watch the proceedings at a respectful distance; but no sooner did the cry of the hounds on finding their fox arise, than he became ungovernable, and on breaking covert we were hurried along, *nolens volens*, across a couple of fields, and over a flight of hurdles, into a low gorse-brake, through which Highflyer tore also, making fearful bounds; but the most daring feat of all was his charging a high, solitary thornbush, not even standing in his path, in which it was an "all but" that we had not been left impaled amidst the branches. Scent being bad, with little prospect of a run, we soon took a line of our own straight to his owner's stables, and have ever since entertained a whole-

some dread of being mounted by a friend. True, there is an old saying about "your friend's horse and your own spurs," but we never could find any pleasure in riding strange horses. They neither understand your way of doing business, nor you theirs, so there must of necessity be doubts and drawbacks until both become more intimately acquainted. Scarcely any two horses go at their fences in the same manner. Some are quite easy to sit, others very difficult, a buck-jumper the most difficult of all at first, but when you know how your horse is going to set about it, you prepare yourself for the spring.

Double bits are more generally used now than formerly, especially in the grazing districts, where horses are sent at their fences rushing wildly, like a bull at a gate; and where so little is done for their education as hunters, it is better to have the two strings to your bow. All horses will go easiest to themselves, and their riders, if allowed to go pretty much in their own way, and according to their formation. Those with small heads neatly joined to an arched neck, with oblique shoulders, will go best in a snaffle bridle; others with ewe-necks or thick jowls require a double bridle to hold them together. Others, again, carry their heads so high as to require a martingale, but these, if too tightly curbed—we might say unnaturally—a good rider will see directly that his horse carries his head as it is set on by nature, and humour him in that inclination as far as necessary. Anything impeding the action and free use of a hunter's

limbs and lungs is wrong; but it is better to ride with a breastplate than draw the girths too tightly to keep the saddle in its proper position. In hill countries this appendage is more required, particularly for light-bodied horses, but the attention of a good horseman will be continually directed to its not pressing too tightly on the neck, and that the throat-lash is sufficiently loose; the curb-chain also.

Perhaps half the men who go out hunting never think of looking to these little matters, which, in reality, are great matters to their horses; but, before mounting, a good sportsman always makes a minute examination of these things, upon the proper adjustment of which the comfort of his horse so much depends. Unnecessary gear about saddle or carriage horses should be avoided, and on that account we prefer a single bit in his mouth, and a saddle without martingale or breastplate attached to it, since they may impede the progress of your hunter in more ways than one over a stiffly-enclosed country. A padded saddle-cloth, made of rough material on the upper side next the saddle, will tend to keep it in its proper place, and answer the purpose of the breastplate. Spurs are considered by some as necessary appendages to a man's boots, as much, perhaps, for ornament as use, and may be required sometimes to keep a horse straight at his fences; but for a good hunter *au fait* at his business, rarely indeed, since we believe he will require no such persuaders to do his best and keep as close to the pack as he possibly can of his own free will. In this respect,

the cry of hounds exercises the same influence over the horse as it does over his rider, the difficulty being rather to keep him within bounds, and check his ardour. Having ridden for the greater part of our hunting career without spurs, we have come to the conclusion that they are not necessaries, although they may be used as auxiliaries. A slug may require a little pricking, but a free-going hunter should never be spurred at any time; and we have, moreover, seen serious accidents from their unintentional application when going through fences and coppices, by the foot being caught by a stiff bough, and the spur pressed against the horse's side. The heel of the boot or the voice are quite sufficient to answer the purpose of adding a little more energy to your horse, if required, and with a lift of the hand and clip of the leg, his spring may be assisted, and speed accelerated without drawing blood.

As to the costume of a foxhunter, nothing can be more appropriate or artistic than the leathers and tops in use for so many years; and although the fashion in these times, the French jack-boot is not less unsportsmanlike in appearance. It may be more comfortable to the wearer, and possibly turn aside a thorn from your knee, yet it cannot equal the neatness of the old top-boot, so identified with all our sporting reminiscences. Caps were worn formerly chiefly by huntsmen and whippers-in, being rather regarded as that distinguishing headpiece or badge of office; now they are adopted by every sporting man who would be thought

a sportsman. The hunting-cap has its advantages as well as disadvantages ; the head is better protected from external injuries by its shape and stronger manufacture than that of hats, or the numerous skull-defenders now in vogue. A blow from the bough of a tree, which would knock your hat off your head, and nearly your head off your shoulders, would strike harmless against the firm texture of the cap ; and in a fall you are less liable to injury. The drawbacks to it are, that the sides of your face and nape of your neck are more exposed to the pitiless peltings of rain and sleet. The cut and colour of a foxhunter's coat are matter of taste, opinion, or profession ; scarlet has been ever considered the most appropriate, as patronized by royalty some centuries ago, and it certainly gives a gay and cheerful aspect to the hunting-field. Green is also assigned to the hunting of deer and hares ; but as it has been said that a good horse cannot be of a bad colour, a good rider is certain to make himself conspicuous in whatever cloth he may appear ; and we have remarked that a "gentleman in black" can hold his own across country, and compete with his brothers in brighter hues.

Some years ago we were almost reconciled to the yellow plush worn by the brothers Oldacre, from their superior management of the old Berkeley foxhounds, as huntsman and whippers-in. By the foxhunters of the old school, a few little extras were considered requisite to complete their equipment for the field. The loose shoe was generally attached to the saddle, in case of losses of this

kind. A small leather case, for *eau de vie* or tincture of rhubarb, according to taste—the latter having been, as reported, the usual cordial taken by the great Mr. Meynell, when exhausted by the fatigue of a long run. *De gustibus non disputandum.* That a drop of *eau de vie* has stood us in good need when meeting with accidents in the hunting-field, we can vouch for, and once in particular, when our fox took his line through a farmyard up hill, which, there being no other mode of getting to the hounds by a high wall on either side, we were obliged to follow. Our only means of exit was through an open door—not a gate—and being young, hot, and hasty at that time, without considering the difference of rising ground, instead of leading our horse through, which we ought to have done, we had the temerity to ride him. The consequences might have been seen had we allowed ourselves a moment for reflection. In lowering our head to pass under, the back of our neck came in contact with the lintel, which, being rather old, gave way ; but the concussion was so severe, that finding ourselves on the point of fainting, we swallowed the contents of our flask, and scrambling out of the saddle lay flat on the grass.

A good pocket-knife may also be found of great service, containing two strong blades, a picker, and small punch, since there are occasions upon which all may be required. A small lancet, in a case by itself, should find a place in the other waistcoat-pocket.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Kennel Register—Genealogical book of reference—Breeding from too near relationship—High courage in foxhounds indispensable—Blood always tells—Interchange of civilities between masters—Mutual confidence—Exchange of stud hounds—Belvoir, Badminton, Brocklesby, and Milton packs—Bramham Moor and Badsworth—Earl of Wemyss and Duke of Buccleuch—The new Master of the Quorn—Huntsman's Diary—Earthstoppers—List of hounds—Efficiency before numbers—Our first essay in the field—Numerical strength a deception.

THERE are two books usually kept in all foxhound kennels of any pretensions to the *lucidus ordo* of doing things. One is the register of births and parentage, the young hounds of every season's entry being regularly inserted therein. This book is carefully preserved and handed down from one huntsman to another, although considered an heir-loom in the family of the master, as proving the genealogical descent of the pack. Without this book to refer to, it would be impossible for a new huntsman to go on breeding hounds with any prospect of success, since too near relationship between sporting dogs of all kinds, particularly foxhounds, has been discountenanced by all experienced sportsmen and masters from the earliest periods. We have heard it asserted by breeders of cattle, that breeding in-and-in, as it is called,

has not been found to act prejudicially to that kind of animal; and some go a point beyond, by saying they are improved by it, in diminution of bone and consequent increase of meat. This may be the case, and, if so, is one reason more why such a result is not desirable in breeding foxhounds, bone being considered an indispensable by masters and huntsmen, as well as plenty of muscle. The two animals, in fact, are bred for wholly different purposes, the one for an inactive short life, to put on flesh and fat as expeditiously as possible, the other to undergo work so long as he can work, and that of the most severe kind. Beyond the decrease of bone, which we have found to follow breeding too closely in hounds and sporting dogs, their courage is also diminished, which a foxhound should possess in a high degree, or he is unfitted for his business. He should never creep through a fence he can jump over, and never give in or shut up, as huntsmen say, at the end of the longest run. His courage is also proved by resolutely facing blackthorn or gorse coverts, a disinclination to draw which, shows the white feather, or rather, a too soft skin. When we say that a foxhound ought not to tire after a severe day, we are supposing him to be in first-rate condition, with muscular power and bone equal to any labours, without which the spirit of a lion would be unavailing; but if thus fitted for the chase, and he shows symptoms of weakness, there must be something amiss in his constitution or pedigree. It is true that some hounds do a deal more towards killing your fox than others, working

hard from the finding to the finish; still, if highly bred, they will never give in, even "when the moon rides pale regent of the sky."

From time immemorial every master of foxhounds has been conceded the privilege of breeding from his neighbour's pack, or any more distant ones, without payment of money, save the usual fees to huntsmen and feeders, as a trifling remuneration for their attention to the ladies consigned to their care for this purpose; and so far from their keep being charged, they live free of expense to their owners during the short period of their sojourn at the other master's kennel. This is a custom we believe unknown to breeders of other sporting dogs, showing the friendly feeling existing between brother-masters anxious to promote the common cause in so disinterested a matter. In some cases reciprocal advantages may occur, but a young master forming a new pack, may for years be importer-general of the best blood from an old-established kennel, without the power of making any return whatever, since the owners of old establishments would not think of sending to those of late formation, and composed, as they generally are, of draft-hounds. Before the introduction of railways, we sometimes had to send more than two hundred miles to a stud-hound of high repute, the journey being performed by road with horse and suit, and a trustworthy servant. Whatever cause of annoyance to foxhunters in other respects, railways are a great convenience to them in the quick transit of horse and hound, at

half the expense formerly incurred. In transactions of this kind (we do not mean railway shares, but kennel shares) one master or huntsman places himself quite at the mercy of the other; but as there is said to be honour amongst thieves, we are quite sure of fair treatment from professors of the noble science, whether masters or men, and our practice was to leave it in the hands of the huntsman to cater for us in the best way he could. It often happens in first-rate kennels that the seraglio is usually filled, at certain periods of the year, by ladies from other establishments courting the favour of Sultan, the best stud-hound in the pack. Under such circumstances, the wishes of all masters cannot be gratified. There may be, however, a brother or brothers of Sultan, not perhaps quite so celebrated or so clever; but, being of the same blood, perhaps it would be better to avail yourself of their services than be quite disappointed in your mission. Knowing that such untoward events would sometimes occur, we generally provided for them by writing the huntsman a full description of the characters of the ladies sent to his kennel, requesting, if the hound we had selected was previously engaged, to give us the benefit of his judgment, by using any other he could recommend. Another course has also been adopted by masters of foxhounds to obviate this inconvenience, in lending or exchanging favourite stud-hounds for the season—far more satisfactory, since they have by these means the opportunity of judging by ocular demonstration the true characters and working

propensities of the stud-hounds they desire to breed from.

Of the numerous packs of foxhounds now and for some years in existence, it would be invidious and difficult to say which is the best, even could such a conclusion be arrived at, although those of the oldest date ought to take precedence of others more recently formed as possessing the oldest blood. The Belvoir and Badminton kennels have, for a length of time, stood at the head of the list with the Brocklesby and Milton packs, the latter having reached the highest perfection under the judicious management of their late talented and celebrated huntsman, Sebright. Farther north, the Bramham Moor pack lays claim to great antiquity, and are hard-working, powerful hounds, fitted for any country. The Badsworth again, under the scientific mastership of Lord Hawke, for more than thirty years have obtained well-merited notoriety. No pack has shown more uninterrupted good sport, season after season, for many years past, than that belonging to the Earl of Wemyss, better known to the sporting world as Lord Elcho. In Scotland, the Duke of Buccleuch's establishment stands at the head of the list, containing, as we are told, a splendid pack of hounds. Retracing our steps back to merry England, there are numerous other packs, deserving more than cursory notice, of which we may have occasion to speak hereafter; and we are glad to find the Quorn kennels are again occupied by a large number of the old pack, under the new mastership of the Marquis of Hastings, to

whom we wish all success in his very arduous undertaking.

Next in order to the stud-book stands the huntsman's diary, in which the events of each day's sport ought to be registered, the weather, place of meeting, foxes found, how many killed or run to ground, scent good, bad, or indifferent, a list of the hounds out for that day, with remarks upon the work of each. The addendum of what earths were stopped will also prove of great service at the close of the season, showing to what remuneration every keeper or earth-stopper is entitled, without trusting entirely to their own little accounts; and when foxes have gone to ground in any known head of earths, the pay should be stopped, to make these gentry more careful for the time to come. The excuse is often made by an idle stopper of earths, that they had been opened again, after being properly closed, by badgers and poachers; but as it is his business, for which he is well paid, to see that they are rightly sealed early in the morning, and unsealed again before nightfall, there is no excuse for this carelessness, particularly if the hounds meet near his covert, where his presence is required. The greatest use, however, of the huntsman's day-book, is in showing the number of days each hound has hunted throughout the season, and the manner in which he has done his work. The faults committed also are dotted down, with other remarks, at the time, which, save for pen, ink, and paper, might escape the memory long before the ides of March came

round again. A list of the hounds drawn for the day's hunting should be carried in his pocket, so that if any are missing, by reference to this slip of paper, in calling over their names, he will at once see which it is. In large establishments this may be thought a work of supererogation; but as the huntsman has some leisure hours after returning to the kennel, even supposing he hunts every day in the week, sufficient time will be found for this post-prandial occupation. The number of the hunting pack will depend upon the body from which they are drawn.

We are no advocates for useless incumbrances, and although the great Mr. Meynell was wont, as is said, to appear at the place of meeting with some forty or fifty couples in his earlier days, he lived to discover that this was a great mistake. We consider eighteen couples the outside complement to take into the field, no matter what the country may be, either pasture or woodland, a small body of hounds being more likely to hold together than a large one; and if they should divide, eight or nine couples, if good, are sufficient to kill the stoutest fox that ever bore a brush. We first commenced our foxhunting career with eight couples and a half only of draft-hounds—odds and, ends from an old kennel; but being known to each other, they made a surprising fight across country, and, strange to say, rarely missed their fox, although, some being in their first season, and others in their sixth and seventh, they could not be said to go together like a flock of pigeons,

reminding us of Beckford's description of a similar lot of hounds in his neighbourhood, which ran in a long extended line, the scent being always recovered by an old southern hound. If scratch packs, ill matched, can give good accounts of their foxes, eight or nine couples of really efficient hounds are, save for the fashion and appearance of the thing, quite sufficient for the purpose of hunting and killing any fox. The great mistake in the present day is to suppose that nothing can be done without vast numerical strength in the kennel or the stable. We hear of sixty, seventy, and even eighty couples of hounds being kept in some large establishments, with a corresponding number of horses and servants, to hunt four days a week, whereas somewhere about half that number would do the work more efficiently, with an immense saving to the master.

I think we have before remarked that young hounds cannot be worked too much, particularly those of unsteady character; and as long as they can jump off their benches quickly, they will be better hunting in the field than lying idle in their lodging-room. Good old steady hounds, of well-tried character, should be used more sparingly, although every hound in the kennel, taking the season throughout, should be able to show at the covert-side at least two days in a week, except from lameness or accidents.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Thus on the air
Depends the hunter's hope. When ruddy streaks
At eve forbode a blust'ring stormy day,
Of low'ring clouds, blacken the mountain's brow,
When nipping frosts and keen biting blasts
Of the dry parching east menace the trees
With tender blossoms teeming, kindly spare
Thy sleeping pack, in their warm beds of straw
Low sinking at their ease.—SOMERVILLE.

Uncertainty of scent—Atmospherical changes—The Coplow run—Much dust—Foxes in a quiescent state—Drawing up wind—Making out the day—Let well alone—Etiquette between masters of foxhounds—"Noli me tangere"—Catch him if you can.

OF all the uncertainties in this uncertain world, there is none greater than that of scent, which seems governed by no general rule, setting at nought the conjectures and speculations of the oldest and most experienced sportsman. There is no state of atmosphere upon which we can confidently depend for a good scenting day, and no state of ground. "A southerly wind and cloudy sky" may proclaim it a hunting morning, yet these prognostications are rarely verified. We might naturally think that a keen cutting east wind would certainly cut off all communication between fox and hound, by driving away and dissipating every particle of effluvium escaping from the animal's body in his quick transit over a hard and parched ground; but we

have noticed a capital scent under circumstances apparently so unfavourable. And what says the writer of the old Coplow song?—

"The wind from north-east was forbiddingly keen."

Again, we should infer that a heavy fall of snow would damp out and obliterate every trace of scent; but every year's experience teaches us the fallacy of such inferences. Hounds run wildly whilst the elements are in wild confusion around, even whilst the ground is whitened by the falling flakes. During the March winds, whilst the dust in thick clouds is flying in their noses, the hounds are seen flying over hard fallow fields. Scent, in short, is a puzzle which none can unravel, a mystery which none can explain, one of those phenomena in nature which we know exists, and yet cannot tell how exists; and the next most wonderful thing is, that fineness of nose with which hounds and sporting dogs are endowed in following on the track over which the game has passed so long before. Evidently there are two kinds of scent, one proceeding or exuding from the body and breath of the animal when in motion, and the other that left by the foot or pad. The first, although the strongest of the two, is dependent chiefly on the atmosphere, and fails more rapidly than that left by pressure on the ground; but the strongest of all is where the game brushes through grass, heather, or stunted gorse, to which these floating exhalations will adhere, instead of being dispersed into liquid air. Foxes in a quiescent state emit little odour, apparently not so much as

hares, rabbits, and other game which pointers and setters will find and stand at some distance; and drawing over a fox is no uncommon occurrence. On this account, when feasible, the draw should be up wind, thus giving hounds every chance of finding their game. This is not of easy accomplishment in our own time, from fixtures being made generally the previous week, and therefore we cannot follow Beckford's advice in this particular, as he suggests, by not going out hunting in bad weather, unfavourable to hounds and scent. We are obliged to take the rough with the smooth, and whilst one pack may by good luck get the best days for their sport, another may fix upon the worst, as it rarely happens that two days in succession are equally bad. Although unable to do as Beckford did, there is no necessity, when the elements are combined to mar sport, and when hounds really can do nothing, to persevere in drawing coverts, and finding fox after fox to no purpose. Such a proceeding is not only disheartening to hounds, but wanton, by spoiling a good draw for another day. Moreover, foxes finding they cannot be pressed, acquire the bad habit of running short. It does so happen sometimes that an unpropitious morning is succeeded by a fine afternoon; but when the day turns out badly about twelve o'clock, there is rarely any improvement afterwards; and there are days—and many too—during the season when hounds and horses would be much better at home.

We do not wonder that huntsmen get out of

temper when obliged, in deference to the wishes of some influential man in the field, to keep drawing, for the sole purpose, as it appears, of eking out the day, for the gratification of those who have nothing better to engage their time; and we have seen, under such circumstances, what is called a sham draw, the huntsman not wishing to find a fox, and if he should, take the first opportunity of losing him. Subscription masters are unfortunately so dependent upon their supporters, that they can scarcely be said to have a will of their own; and there are many of these men who stand out for their money's worth; and a day's hunting to them is literally to be a day's hunting, or drawing, or following hounds about from covert to covert, be the weather ever so opposed to sport, unless rain is falling in torrents; the type of man who "won't go home till morning" from a ball or festive entertainment. To our mind, however, enough is as good as a feast, and we have never been in the habit of measuring sport by the hour, or continually drawing for fox after fox, until we could see to draw no longer. Even on good scenting days hounds may have too much of a good thing, and if well bred and in condition, they will run and hunt as long as they find foxes, yet not in the same style as when above their work and flushed with success. In these matters we ought not to be guided by the watch, and when a run has exceeded an hour with satisfactory results, *dulce domum* should be the next order of the day.

If the weather is favourable to scent, and with

an early find, and you kill your fox before twelve or half-past, after thirty-five or forty minutes' burst, there can be no objection to draw for another, when hounds are in high feather, and their spirits ready and willing. Never mistrust them then, for they will assuredly—barring untoward events—give as good an account of Number 2, although he may run for a couple of hours or more. Afternoon foxes are proverbially stouter runners than those found in the morning, not because they are in reality better in frame, but because, having enjoyed a longer rest from the previous night's exertions in seeking provisions for their larder, with longer time for digesting their supper, they are equal to go great lengths with their pursuers. There is another turn also in their favour: scent generally becomes worse towards the turn of the afternoon. Hounds may keep on, running sometimes and hunting sometimes, but, somehow or other, they don't make that rapid progress they did in the morning. Their speed also imperceptibly diminishes. Fast for one mile, slow for two, until by a piece of good luck your fox may wait for you, or a change from bad soil to good cause a diversion in your favour. So long as a fox can maintain a certain distance between his own *corpus* and the pack, by slackening his pace the scent becomes less, although we do not suppose this wily animal to be cognizant of the fact, fact though it be.

Upon several occasions we have been enabled to prove this by ocular demonstration. Once in particular, after a severe chase, on our fox ascending a

steep hill, we could witness his every movement, being nearly beaten. He was labouring up the hill-side, sometimes stopping entirely, to look down upon his on-coming foes; and we noticed that on those spots where he stood still, the scent failed more than on any other part of the ground. Being nearly beaten ourselves, and obliged to dismount and walk our horse up the hill, we were unable to improve our position but by lifting the hounds forward to a view, a piece of generalship allowable when running into your neighbour's country to catch your fox before he reaches the earths there. Our impatience may be imagined upon so tempting an occasion, of which we were so anxious to take advantage; but knowing the point to which he was bending, we contented ourselves with watching his proceedings and husbanding our horse's strength for what we knew would be the final struggle when once over the crest of the hill. It happened as we expected. The fox having got second wind, went off again at good speed over the open down, and as his pace increased, so *pari passu* increased the pace of the hounds. There was nothing before us for miles: not a fence nor even a ploughed field, and seeing the point for which he was making, we took the liberty of lifting our hounds with a short cheer or two, of which, knowing the meaning, they caught sight of their game, and never lost sight of him again until they rolled him over on the plain. There are occasions upon which huntsmen may fairly take such liberties with a good pack of

hounds, without any ill effects, although the "*hark hallou!*" system, if frequently pursued, would soon inevitably spoil them. A spirt of this kind at the end of a long day rouses the spirits of hounds and horses, and the former knowing by their master's cheer and manner, when riding at their head, that the fox is in view before them, strain all their energies to the utmost. By the law, or custom rather, of foxhunting, one master has no right to send a whipper-in forward to stop his neighbour's earths; when the hunted fox's point is evidently to reach that place of refuge, he must catch him before he can find sanctuary there, which is held to be sacred ground; neither has he any right to disturb the earth by pickaxe or spade. It is considered fair, however, to dislodge him when running into a small pipe or drain, if he can be bolted by a stick or terrier; although this is sometimes looked upon as a *casus belli*, calling for reprisals on the other side, which, for the common cause, ought to be avoided; and we think it far better to avoid collision—to do by our neighbour as we should like to be treated ourselves; and if our hounds are running with a moderate scent for one of his coverts, to stop them from entering it. An act of courtesy like this *jungit amicos servitque junctos*. Masters are very sensitive upon this point, and whatever they may say, they do not like to hear of a fox being killed in their country by another pack, although ever so fairly dealt with. It is quite a different affair when hounds are on good terms with their fox, and every prospect of

catching him before he can gain your neighbour's covert. Catch him if you can then, by all means, and as quickly as you can; and this is one of the occasions upon which a little extra excitement is permissible, if not thought quite orthodox by some old sportsmen of the regular hunting school.

We remember arousing the ire of an elderly gentleman of this class by an enterprising act akin to the one above related. We had been running and hunting our fox alternately for about an hour and twenty minutes over a variety of ground, parts holding a fair scent, part fallow, with little or none, when he set his head straight for a large covert in our neighbour's country, which, without some change in our favour, he was bound to enter. Being on high ground at this time, an old sportsman cried out, pointing with his whip, "Yonder he goes, my young master, over that common; see how the crows and magpies are ducking down upon him! Notwithstanding, he does not appear to be very much in a hurry, and with such a scent you cannot overhaul him to-day."

"Then," we answered, "we must endeavour to make the scent a little better."

"Ha, ha!" he replied, "sooner said than done; he'll beat you now, to a dead certainty."

Our monkey being up, we took the hounds off their noses, setting them down the hill, nearly at the top of their speed, to a green lane, at the end of which we guessed our fox must cross, in a line with the covert, he being at that time rather to the left of it. The *ruse* succeeded; the hounds caught

sight of him as he jumped into the lane, and raced him over three large enclosures, catching him just before he reached the covert. Our elderly friend, in coming up, when we handled the fox, expressed his disapprobation at our summary proceedings, muttering something about "its not being fox-hunting," in reply to which we gave him a quotation from his favourite Beckford : "a fair foxhunter and a foolish one being synonymous terms." But the only chance in unfavourable weather is to keep as near as possible to our fox, since the faster he flies the better will be the scent. It is generally believed that rich pasture-land holds a far better scent than a lighter and poorer soil. This, however, is not invariably the case, since it often happens in wet weather, that hounds can run harder over down-land than across fields capable of grazing a bullock. Neither has drainage—as might have been supposed—effected any great improvement in this respect, since we can remember fields, partly covered with rushes and coarse grass, holding a capital scent some years ago, which they have failed to do now that they have been thoroughly drained.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Beware! the ditch still lurks unseen,
Which oft the cause of dire mishap has been;
But who can pause the dangerous leap to scan?
Miltonia victa, would'st thou own the man?
No—no—rush on, and ev'ry doubt defy—
'*Sans peur et sans reproche*,' the hunter's cry."

Men, horses, and hounds adapted to country—The shires and the provinces—Dick Woodcraft and the Quorn—Comes to grief with Ploughman—His soliloquy—The first check—Hark! halloa!—Up and down wind—Dick Woodcraft assists in recovering the line—Things improve—Fire and water—Tom Clearwell *hors de combat*—Woodcraft takes the horn—Astonishes the field—Finish to the run of the season—The mystery solved.

PARTICULAR countries require a particular sort of hound suited to them; and not hounds only, but men and horses also; for the most talented huntsman, transferred with his highflier out of Leicestershire or Northamptonshire, into Hants or Berks, without an acquaintance with the peculiarity of the country and the running of the foxes, would find himself all abroad, and entirely out of his element—and *vice versâ*, take a good woodland huntsman, from flints and fallows, and his little spinnies of about two thousand acres each, down into the shires, mounted on his famous hunter Ploughman, everything would be different, and altogether a different style of doing things to what he had been accustomed. Large open pastures, with rasping quickset fences and bullfinches, posts and

rails, to diversify the riding, and an occasional brook, although not very wide, deep and nasty to look at, with hollow banks; patches of gorse, and pretty little spinnies of three or four acres only, in place of interminable woods. Then the turn-out at the meet. Huntsman and whips spruce, smart, good-looking fellows, dressed as in their Sunday's best, mounted on their bang-tailed, showing breeding and condition good enough to run for the St. Leger. Then the hounds, long lathy animals, with plenty of bone and symmetry, and coats on their backs soft and silky as moleskins. See how jauntily and saucily they step along over the greensward to the covert, a piece of high gorse lying on the hill-side, followed by a crowd of some two hundred horsemen.

Dick Woodcraft looks aghast at the cavalcade pressing upon him, and his favourite hunter shows symptoms of fretfulness and impatience.

"Oh!" quoth Dick, "I'm a-thinking there'll be some queerish work presently amongst these gents on their prancing nags, and I'il just keep as near the hounds as may be, where 'tis likely very many of these fierce-looking chaps won't be, if there's a bit of scent." Well, they reach the gorse; with a wave of the huntsman's hand, and a low "Hoic in hoic!" eighteen couples disappear—a whimper is soon heard—then another note or two—a screech at the farther end, a crack of the whip from Jack —and they are away. Dick Woodcraft has not time for thinking now, he is hurried along in the front rank on Ploughman, frantic with excitement

at the din and clatter in his rear; but the first-flight men, on their thorough-breds, rapidly draw away from the cocktail, and ere the hounds have gone two miles, Dick Woodcraft is out of the race, and brought to grief by his own hunter trying to take an upright quickset, with double ditches, as an on and off, *more suo*, and his master, whilst lying on his back, is gratified by the sight of four bright horseshoes glittering over his head. Dick did not require a second hint of this kind to remind him that he was not then in Hampshire, or amongst Hampshire sportsmen, so he picked himself and Ploughman up as quickly as possible, and jumping into the pigskin, sailed away again.

"Now, Ploughman," quoth Dick, "I think we can show these grand Quornites a trick. It's no use riding in their wake; at such a pace the hounds are running we can't catch 'em—that's out of the question; but if they don't kill their fox in ten minutes more, he'll turn down wind to a dead certainty, so here goes for a nick in, our only chance of seeing them again; besides which Ploughman fancies himself in that vale between Greatwood and Wallop, taking it for granted that there must be a bank between two ditches—so now we have it all to ourselves, I'll just switch him at his fences, and take that conceit out of his head, which, by the way, is a trifle too heavy for this sort of thing—in short, 'tis no use mincing the matter, a half-bred one can't go in this country."

Thus soliloquized Dick Woodcraft, a clever, intelligent huntsman, amidst flint fallows and faggot-

sticks, as he turned right away from the line others were following into one of his own choosing, pricking Ploughman along and teaching him to take his fences. Dick's conjectures proved correct as to the event of this furious burst up wind; the fox, finding he could not hold it any longer, turned short away to the right for another point, in the direction Dick was riding, crossing a large open pasture just in view of him.

"Ha, ha!" he chuckled, "just as I thought; that's our friend, and no mistake, although I never see him before. He's in a terrible fluster, but I shan't holler him yet; let Ploughman get his wind first. But where are the hounds?—I can't hear one of 'em."

Ah! where were the hounds?—Making a swinging cast forward, after having passed across one large field without an atom of scent. Tom Clearwell, their huntsman, was still holding them on, trying to recover the scent in a semicircle, when Jem, the first whip, whose ears were always open to squalls, rode up to him, saying, "Master, I think I hear a halloa to the right of us, down wind, but 'tis very faint."

"Then be off, Jem, whilst I make sure of my ground, and if it's all right, give us the office."

Jem went off like a shot, and as he neared Dick Woodcraft another view-halloa greeted his ear, about which there could be no mistake, and his own scream came forth in such shrill response, that Tom, catching them up, rode wildly off to the point, Dick still vociferating with might and main.

"Where's he gone?" asked Jem, still keeping in advance, as he reached the spot where sat Woodcraft, coolly contemplating this new scene of pastures green.

"Across this field," was the reply; "and he jumped the fence close to that ash-tree yonder."

"How long ago?"

"Fifteen minutes, at least."

"Then it's no go—we can't recover him."

"I will, if your hounds are worth their pudding."

"Pray, sir," asked Jem, "what may you be pleased to call yourself? Miracles are out of date in this country."

"One who has hunted hounds before you were born, you fool!" was Dick's indignant rejoinder.

"Well, uncle," quoth Tom, "I thought we should never see you again."

"Turned up like a trump, at last," said Dick; "but now put 'em down at the fence by that old ash-tree, and they'll hit it then at once; give 'em time, Tom, and let's see if they can hunt as well as run. Any curs can do the last. Up wind, with a burning scent close to your fox's brush, and down wind a long way behind him, are very different affairs."

The flyers did not relish the change, and a few old hounds only felt disposed to work on the line, which they did, rather improving their pace for two or three fields. The fast men were beginning their usual murmurings about "deuced slow," "a good day lost,"&c., when the master said, "Give

him up, Tom, and draw for another; it's no use persevering with this cold scent."

"He is taking a good line, my lord, pointing for the Belvoir country; and if we can get on better terms we shall have a capital run."

"Never mind, stop the hounds; he will do for another day."

"I would kill him," said Dick, "as sure as he's got a brush, if I had my way with him."

"Who's that old gentleman?" inquired the master, hearing Dick's bold assertion.

"My uncle, my lord," replied Tom, touching his cap; "sent down by his master in Hants to see how we do things here."

"Then, by Jove! he shall have his way. What's his name?"

"Dick Woodcraft," my lord.

Riding up to him, the master said, "So you say you could recover this fox, and kill him, provided you have your own way? You shall have it; go on."

"Thanks, my lord," touching his hat continually all the time he was addressed; "but, begging your lordship's pardon, when they begins to run again I can't keep company with them on this old-fashioned hunter."

"Ah! I see,—good, no doubt, in the rough country you come from; but we will set you right in that respect. Tom, let your uncle have your second horse."

"Yes, my lord;" and in a minute Dick had deserted Ploughman, and was standing by the

side of his new hunter, looking to the girths, bridle, &c., to see all was right before mounting.

"He's as tall as a tree!" was his first remark. "Here, Will, give us a leg up, or a rope ladder," and he was launched by the second horseman into his saddle.

"Now, Mr. Woodcraft," said Will, "mind, if you tumbles out of the tree, you won't find another chap to help you up again."

"Thank'e, Will, for your lift and advice," and away went Dick to join his nephew and the cry, which had begun to swell into something more ike a chorus, than a chop now and then by the old ones. "We are warming up a little, Tom. Well done, old woman!" he cried, seeing Bounty press forward to the front. "Have at him, my beauties! Hoic, together hoic!" and Dick lent them a cheer which seemed to electrify the pack as well as the field.

"Who the deuce is that old fogey on Tom's horse, hunting the hounds?" asked Mr. G—— of Lord W——.

"Some fellow from the Blue Mountains, come down to give us a lesson. We were going to draw for a fresh fox, when S—— overheard him making some remark about giving up a good one for the chance of finding a better, declaring he would kill him if he had his own way. So S—— said he should have it. That's all I know of the matter. He seems a lively old bird, but is sure to fail in the fencing department, when hounds run. They are getting on, however, and so must we."

"I say, Tom," cried Dick, as they were nearing a rasper, "does this nag of yours want much looking after?"

"None at all, uncle; give him his head, and he will skim over everything like a swallow; but he won't stand pulling up at his fences. We don't do things in that fashion down here—haven't time for it."

The fox having recovered his wind by running down wind, now turned his head apparently for his first point, and having lingered awhile in a small osier bed, through which he passed, the hounds came out the other side in full chorus, going away at a good rattling pace; when, hearing the cry, the cavalcade of horsemen began pressing upon them, as is their practice in fast countries, fearing they would give them the slip.

"One minute, gentlemen, if you please," pleaded Tom for his darlings. "Let 'em settle down once more, and we shall do."

"Hold hard!" roared Dick. "Hang it, gentlemen, hold hard!" as half a dozen fire-eaters were right in amongst the hounds.

"It's no use rating them, uncle, we can't stop 'em; but there is something t'other side of that fence that will do it for us."

"Oh! I see, water! Wide, Tom?"

"Not very, but deep and muddy; let him go," and with a cheer to the pack now dashing headlong into it, both were landed on the right side, and on looking back, the fire-eaters were seen cooling themselves in the stream; but the select

few had drawn ahead in their places, riding, however, wide of the hounds. On ascending the hill —more like a mole-hill than a mountain—they brushed through a patch of gorse, and thence the race began afresh, with heads up and sterns down, for a couple of miles, when the eagle eye of Dick perceived they had overshot the mark in the middle of a grass-field.

"Steady, Tom!" he exclaimed, "there's no scent afore those young'uns: here it is, to the left. Ah! old Bounty has it!" and with a cheer, to which the pack wheeled round in an instant, they were again scouring away.

"Well done, uncle!" cried Lord S——. "That eye of yours has saved Tom's head, and ten minutes to boot. Now we shall handle him."

"I think so too, my lord; but he ain't beat yet."

A mile farther on another check at a green lane, into which the fox had jumped, going only half way across it, and the leading couples, in hot haste, dashing over the opposite fence, with Tom alongside of them.

"Here it is, down the lane!" cried Woodcraft, seeing a couple of old hounds turn short under the hedge.

"Put 'em along, Jack," cried Tom, with a toot-toot on his horn, and away he rode, full tilt, with the pack at his horse's heels, straight across the field. A cheer told that his *ruse* had succeeded. He had rightly guessed the fox's line, and gained a hundred yards upon him by this bold stroke.

"Ay, ay, master Tom!" muttered Dick, "that hit or miss sort of thing wouldn't do over our flints and fallows; but the young dog has got the start of me through that trick," and our hero laboured hard to catch them again, for some little time in vain. Tom, however, was soon in difficulties with a large flock of Leicester sheep, which seemed bent on hunting his fox for him, and did so to the fence, before Jem and Jack could divert them from their purpose. Tom was not deterred by this misadventure, but holding them forward, as usual, with a swinging cast, just missed the upper corner of the field, where two fences met, and which the fox had threaded. Dick had time now to recover lost ground, and on coming up he found a hard-riding sporting yeoman, off his horse, standing in that corner of the field.

"Killed him?" asked Dick.

"Oh! no, he is not half killed yet; but if I know anything about foxhunting, here is the line of our fox, towards which some of the hounds were inclining, when Clearwell hurried them away; and here I shall remain until he finds out his mistake."

"Why don't you halloa him back, then?"

"Not I; he knows too much or too little to suit my ideas of what a huntsman ought to be."

Woodcraft, feeling impatient, whilst the fox was running in one direction and the hounds trying in another, could not forbear a loud "Yoi-haut!" (pronounced long as Y-o-i-i-h-a-u-t), signifying, in hunting parlance, hold hard and try back, and Tom, taking the hint, wheeled round towards the

spot where Dick was posted; but, in galloping back, his horse put his fore-leg into a rabbit-stop, and a heavy fall was the result, by which he was so shaken that he could scarcely get up again. Seeing he was more hurt than he liked to confess, the master desired Woodcraft and Jem to go on with the hounds, leaving Jack to take care of his huntsman. Much time was lost by this unfortunate accident, but Tom, declaring he should be all right, and with him again, Dick obeyed orders by recovering the lost ground at a hunting pace, resolved now to keep the hounds' noses down; and thus he persevered, until they began running pretty briskly into the Belvoir country. They had flocks of sheep and other impediments thrown in their way, yet he held them on through all, without taking them quite off their noses, and the few who now followed the hounds began to wonder how a stranger to their country could do such strange things.

"Now, mind," said Dick to Jem, the first whip, "we shall be in the Belvoir home-wood directly. Take care you don't halloa a fresh fox; ours has had nearly enough of it."

Dick proved a true prophet; the fox entered at the east end of the covert, not half a mile before the pack, and they raced him up the long drive at such a rate, that he had no time to turn right or left, and away he went down into the vale, where they ran from scent to view, rolling him over in the open, before he reached the village of Botsford, Dick never having been thrown out of the tree

until he vacated it of his own accord to handle his fox.

"Well done, indeed!" exclaimed the master, in an ecstasy of delight; "you have redeemed your pledge gloriously, Woodcraft. The run of the season, or of any season, something like the old Coplow, though not quite so long, and the wind in the same quarter; but how could you guess so well the line of your fox?"

"I was whipper-in to Mr. Goosey, the duke's huntsman, for three seasons," was his reply.

"Ah! the mystery is explained now," added the master.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"At length an old chest that had long lain hid
Was brought to light—they rais'd the lid,—
A skeleton form lay mould'ring there,
In the bridal robes of the lady fair."—*Mistletoe Bough.*

Different standards of foxhounds—The Craven and H. H. packs—The late Sir John Cope and his rattlers—Bramshill, and the old oak chest—The *multum in parvo*—Hounds changing countries—Mr. Osbaldiston and Sebright in Hants—The two celebrated squires and their exploits—"Mors omnia vincit."

All foxhounds are not equally suited to all countries; and although a low standard, in comparison with that of former years, is now the fashion, not exceeding twenty-four inches in height, with consistent bone and power, yet even that would be considered out of place in many districts. Where large woodlands form the chief feature of any country, with continuous hills, a hound of twenty-one or twenty-two inches will be found to answer the purpose far better than one of larger dimensions, provided he has power and courage for the work, since covert-hunting is the most laborious and trying—far more irksome than running all day in the open. A small, or rather low hound can follow his game through all the meuses and intricacies of the thickest woods without being obliged to exert himself so much as one of greater height; for, instead of breasting the briars and blackthorns, he is

enabled to creep under them, and in gorse-coverts he has on this account a decided advantage over larger hounds. In a flinty country also he can travel much more easily, where weight tells against a big one by his feet being sadly bruised against these sharp obstacles lying so thickly over the fields. The late Mr. Ward, it is true, hunted the Craven country for many years with a very large and heavy sort—the largest pack of foxhounds in those days; but he must have known and seen that they were little adapted to the country from the number of lame hounds always in hospital during the season; and in dry weather a third of the hunting pack would become invalided, after a hard day, with bruised feet, the only remedy for which used by their huntsman was to let out the blood from the ball of the foot, by means of a sharp incision of his penknife. Through this surgical operation the hound was of course unfitted for work again until the wound healed. There were two reasons for Mr. Ward persevering with this large sort of hound in such a country. The first, that he had, throughout his earlier career as M.F.H., been accustomed to breed hounds of large size, well suited to the grazing districts he had previously hunted, and on changing countries he did not choose to change his style of hound.

Perhaps there was another, not confessed, although suspected: knowing heavy hounds could not run away from him when more advanced in years, and become slower himself over those flints and fallows; in confirmation of which we remember a

remark made by him when looking over the hounds of the late Mr. Villebois, who then hunted the H.H. country with a pack the very reverse to his own, peculiarly suited to their country as to height, cleanness of limb, and hunting qualifications—in short, we do not remember any hounds of that day so well calculated to hunt a rough country. The two masters were canvassing the merits of an individual in the lady pack, remarkable for great beauty and symmetry, when Mr. Ward said, "Yes, she is surpassingly handsome; but eighteen stone" (meaning himself) "could not see which way that hound went." It would have been no easy matter, however, even supposing Mr. Ward had the disposition to breed hounds of a smaller sort, since it has been invariably found that like begets like, and he could not have reduced his standard without great trouble for many years. Although so large, they still would hunt, and did hunt, as low a scent as beagles; and we believe for a period of eighteen years they fought on this uncongenial soil, killing on an average their forty brace of foxes annually —no very easy conquest with an abundance of game and heavy woodlands.

The most attractive features of that country were, however, the jovial-looking faces at the place of meeting, which were wont to assemble again in the evening at the festive board, the Craven at that time having obtained the character of being the best six o'clock country in England. Adjoining this, on the eastern side, lay that part of Berkshire then occupied by Sir John Cope, of

Bramshill, who possessed a pack neither resembling Mr. Ward's nor Mr. Villebois', but between the two. We should not have called them very close hunters, or gifted with very extraordinary nasal qualifications, but they were remarkably quick in their work, and committed havoc amongst the foxes. At Bramshill we were shown a long old-fashioned oak chest, standing in the picture gallery, where it is said the Lady Lovel was suffocated, when playfully hiding from her lord, as related in the song under the title of "The Mistletoe Bough." When lifting the lid a shudder crept over us, to think that one so young and fair should have met with such a dreadful fate.

At that time the Vine hounds, kept by Mr. Chute, were in the zenith of their power, quite the *multum in parvo* sort, low on the leg, with plenty of bone and muscle, and so distinguished for their performances in the field, as well as ancient descent from very old blood, that even Mr. Ward did not hesitate occasionally breeding from them; and later, Mr. Assheton Smith showed us a hound, Radical, which he obtained from the Vine kennel, the most powerful and clever dog we have ever seen for his inches. These hounds, accustomed to a rough country, would, as a matter of course, if taken into a good scenting one, with grass instead of flinty fallows beneath their feet, acquit themselves most creditably, although for the shires a larger kind of hound has been found better able to contend with the obstructions of stiff fences and heavier land, where little hounds and little horses

are generally in difficulties, from constant strain upon their exertions. When, however, a good pack of hounds is transferred from the grazing districts to flinty hills and large woodlands, the change cannot fail to operate most unfavourably upon them. The late Mr. Osbaldiston tried this experiment many years ago, when removing his establishment into the Hambledon country, where he anticipated an easy victory over the Hampshire foxes. A better pack of hounds could not be ; and of the Squire himself, as a huntsman, or Tom Sebright, it were needless to say more than we have written before. Nothing could be more perfect than the whole staff: and yet what did they effect ? How many foxes succumbed to this formidable array of men, horses, and hounds, all the very first class ? The noses were so easily counted, that the cleverest of all huntsmen retired in disgust, and acknowledged his defeat.

Some years after, his rival brother-master, Assheton Smith, commenced forming his establishment at Tedworth, on the borders of the same county ; and we remember that for two seasons it was a very up-hill game for him to fight, his hounds coming from grass countries. But having resolved to live for the residue of his days at his old family place, he set resolutely and patiently to work, and his usual success attended his efforts. For the first season his chief, and we may add sole dependence rested upon a very large old badger-pied hound, named Solomon, given to him by Mr. Ward, upon his resigning the Craven country. This hound

was indeed rightly named, possessing the wisdom of Solomon in all hunting matters; and without his assistance we have heard his master declare he never should have killed a fox at that time in his newly-adopted country. Having been accustomed to large hounds, Mr. Assheton Smith showed great reluctance to lower his standard, but experience soon convinced him of this necessity. It was, however, a work of time, since the dog-hound would give evidence of their descent from a large sort; but the lady pack, after a few years, became exceedingly level, averaging from twenty-two to twenty-three inches in height; and up to the time of Mr. Smith's decease, no hounds in any rough country have ever shown greater sport, or killed more foxes. When running over those flinty fallows, we have noticed them, as well as other hounds in like localities, keeping to the furrows, if possible, to avoid cutting their feet; but on reaching a piece of down-land or old clover ley, they would then spread out and carry a good head. Many have been the runs recorded in *Bell's Life* of this pack forcing their fox through Collinbourne woods, Thackham, and Dowles—all coverts of immense size—and killing him in the open. A very valuable addition to his kennel was also made by the purchase of the late Duke of Grafton's hounds, which were of a hardy, wiry nature, and indefatigable in their work. Mr. Assheton Smith lived long enough to see his hopes and expectations fully realized in the formation of a new country, with a splendid pack of hounds exactly fitted for it;

and we have often heard him declare, that he never enjoyed better sport, or saw longer runs, when hunting the far-famed Quorn country, than over the much-despised flinty hills of Hants and Wilts. Of Assheton Smith himself, and his rival, Osbaldiston, so lately consigned to the tomb, nothing now remains but the fame of their extraordinary exploits by flood and field, which will be handed down through succeeding generations of sportsmen, until foxhunting shall be no more.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Hounds stout, and horses healthy,
Earths well stopped and foxes plenty."

Earth-stoppers and keepers—Barring out for the season—A failure—The earth-stopper and his pony of olden time—Gamekeepers—Their perquisites and tricks—Game preservers and foxes—Turning down cubs—Previous treatment—Mange in foxes—Main earths in sandy soils—Viper buried for ten days—Badgers and their habits.

EARTH-STOPPERS are necessary appendages to every foxhunting establishment, without whose assistance huntsmen and hounds would not be able to get on, or show good sport. There are days when foxes prefer basking in the sunshine to lying underground, but rarely do we find such days; during the depth of winter, and in boisterous or rainy weather, they will, if possible, hide themselves beneath the surface of the soil somewhere, either in the regular head of earths, large rabbit-burrows, or old drains. The experiment has been tried by more than one master to block up the earths entirely throughout the season, directing those whom it ought to concern to keep them thus closed until the end of the campaign, when the doors were again to be thrown open to the lawful tenants of the domicile, or any other visitors. This had a twofold object, first, to ensure the earths being properly stopped, since

earth-stoppers are very loth to turn out of bed in the middle of a cold wintry night, and, unless the earths are stopped between the hours of ten o'clock at night and two o'clock in the morning, there is no certainty of barring foxes out; the other object in view was to diminish the expense, by giving so much per annum to the man so employed, in place of the half-crown or dollar for each night's work. This plan failed on both counts. Foxes bred underground will lie underground, and when stopped out of their old haunts will find other places of refuge unknown to earth-stoppers or keepers, and there remain *perdu* for the season, or be trapped by poachers; and the earth-stoppers, deprived of the usual emoluments appertaining to their office, turned restive, and became indifferent about preserving foxes. There can be no doubt as to the bad policy of offending these men, upon whose willing co-operation so much of our sport depends, and for their work, if fairly executed, they are entitled to a fair recompense.

The earth-stopper of olden times is rarely to be met with now: this man was formerly a servant belonging to the establishment, to whom the supervision over a large tract of country was confided, a pony being kept for him by the master, and it was his duty to be continually going the rounds of all the coverts in which there were any heads of earths, to see that no poaching or trapping was carried on, in winter and summer alike. During the breeding season he had his time fully occupied in visiting and looking after sundry litters of cubs,

for which he was held responsible, and during the winter months stopping the earths. Such a situation could not be considered a sinecure, for it entailed upon him the worst of all work—night work ; as a reward for which, however, he had the privilege of seeing his foxes found occasionally on his rough pony, when not overtired with the previous night's exertions in barring them out, although not able ofttimes to see a run, unless of a very slow character, in which from knowledge of country and the line of foxes, he would sometimes cut a conspicuous figure.

In cub-hunting lay his chief amusement: first stopping the earths and then awaiting the arrival of the hounds at the covert-side about four o'clock in the morning, and after being in at the death of a cub or two, he returned to his breakfast, the remainder of the day being at his own disposal. The picture of this sporting character of bygone days is still present to our mind, accompanied by his rough terrier, with a spade thrown over his right shoulder, and holding in the other hand a lantern, the rein hanging loose on his pony's neck. In this respect things are now greatly changed—

"Othello's occupation's gone."

Gamekeepers claim the right of stopping earths in the coverts over which they are appointed protectors, and in non-preserved localities the woodman has the same privilege ; in others of small extent hedgers and ditchers employed on the farm undertake the business. The latter class of

men are more to be depended upon than the gentlemen in velveteen, whose demands, if serving under non-hunting proprietors, or renters, are most extortionate, and beyond this there is little chance, pay as you may, of inducing them to act fairly and honestly. They tell you long stories about foxes devouring their perquisites—rabbits—by wholesale, and taking hen-pheasants off their nests, whereby their complement of that kind of game is so reduced that they are obliged to purchase eggs elsewhere. The master of the hounds has no alternative in such cases but to satisfy, or rather pay these men large sums annually for litters of cubs bred in their woods, and a handsome *douceur* for every fox found afterwards. The cubs are kept until found by the hounds, at least some of them. The keeper boasts of his forbearance in preserving them, but they are found no more. He has got his two guineas, and destroys those that remain immediately after, and the old vixen also, if she is to be caught. His guinea for foxes found during the hunting season he considers tolerably secure, since foxes, when routed from adjoining coverts, are sure to seek shelter in quiet places, and where they have little trouble in providing themselves with food.

These tricks cannot be played under proprietors honourably disposed towards foxhunting. Under them keepers must have a good show of game as well as foxes—and they have them. Not very long ago we knew a large landed proprietor who, not hunting himself, took very little concern about

foxes, although professing to preserve them for his neighbour, who kept foxhounds. Upon his property there were several good coverts and heads of earths, which had, from time immemorial, produced several litters of cubs; in short, it was what is called "foxy ground," yet here were no foxes now to be found. The master, on making remonstrances, year after year, was met with this rejoinder—"I give my keepers orders not to kill foxes, and am assured by them they do not. Can you prove the contrary?"

"Yes," was the reply; "a fox was brought to me yesterday with a trap on his leg, which has your mark upon it, and this, I presume, is presumptive evidence that your keepers do gin foxes, although it is done, as you say, contrary to your orders. Here is the trap with your initials, and the maker's name. The fox died from mortification last night."

"Well, I will make inquiries about it," was the satisfactory answer to this remonstrance.

The result was, the head keeper denied having set the trap, saying it must have been stolen from their woods by some poacher, and used by him for this purpose somewhere out of their bounds; and the master of the hounds, finding the master of the coverts so little disposed to sift the matter farther, gave up the point. Some two years after, this gentleman, tired with preserving, let the shooting over his coverts and lands to a genuine sportsman, fond of hunting as well as shooting, whose first act was to discharge all the old keepers

given to these malpractices, and put fresh men in their places, telling them, unless they kept plenty of game for himself and friends, with foxes also, for the amusement of his neighbours, they would not continue very long in his service; and to show his determination about the preservation of the latter, he gave several young cubs at the spring of the year to his head keeper, with directions to put them into the main earths, and there feed them with rabbits until they could provide themselves. We need scarcely mention that the hounds never afterwards drew those coverts blank.

In turning down cubs, certain precautions are necessary to insure their safety, and before being let loose they ought to be kept, until two months old, in some large airy building, with a few faggots in one corner, or a box—not one ever used by dogs—to hide themselves under. If taken very young, new milk must be given them night and morning, and a young rabbit or two, skinned, left for their supper at night. If of good size, then water will be better; but it must be clean and fresh every day, and clean hay or straw for their bedding, to be changed every other day. In their natural state, foxes are of very cleanly habits, and if neglected or confined in too small a place when young, they will become mangy, and certainly die when turned out. The mange in these animals is of a very different character to the disease so common to dogs. It generally affects the back, loins, and brush in the form of large scabs, the hair falls off, and we have rarely known an instance

of the strongest old fox recovering from this malady. It has been supposed that the cause of this disease is attributable to a sudden chill after a severe chase. There is some reason in this supposition ; but, however engendered, it is evidently contagious, since we have known foxes generally affected by it in certain districts ; and cubs, if confined too long in close places, without plenty of air, will assuredly become mangy. Before turning them down in main earths, careful examination should be made that no badgers or old foxes frequent these strongholds, or they will kill these strange cubs immediately. All the pipes or outlets, save one, must then be stopped up with stones or brushwood, and the main entrance left open until the cubs are placed therein, which must then be closed also with rough stones, so arranged that the air is not excluded, with sufficient space for a pan of water and food being placed inside. By keeping the cubs thus shut in for two days and nights, and fed regularly at the same hour—eight o'clock in the evening—they will become accustomed to their new home, and there remain ; but if default is made by the man to whose care they are entrusted in supplying them without fail every night with rabbits, they will wander away in quest of food, and most likely be starved to death.

Sand is the most healthy of all soils for foxes, and the underground labyrinths in an old head of earths of this description are really astonishing.

Tier upon tier or floor after floor of passages and lodging-rooms, to the depth sometimes of twelve or fourteen feet, when lying against a sandy hill, have been exposed to our view ; and once, in particular, we remember employing three men for a week in digging for a favourite terrier which had gone to ground after a fox. So various were the windings, that we were obliged to give up further excavations in despair ; and at the end of the ninth day, during which time the dog had been buried in the bowels of the earth, he emerged, a perfect skeleton, bones and skin only, but with the greatest possible care he recovered. The cause of his long confinement was that the fox kept throwing up sand in his way as a barrier between them, which the dog in turn had to throw behind him, thus unconsciously burying himself deeper and deeper, until a return became impossible ; but fortunately we had cut across his track, thus giving him an opportunity of escape. Badgers are the chief excavators of these subterranean cavities, for which purpose they are naturally qualified by their long claws, resembling those of a mole ; and it is an old saying "that badgers, like fools, make houses for foxes and sensible people to live in." These very beautiful and harmless animals having, however, been put into the keeper's catalogue of vermin, are rarely now, if ever, met with in this fell destroyer's precincts, although everybody knows, who knows anything about natural history, that the badger is supplied with these claws by nature to dig his

food out of the earth, as well as dig his hole into it. On passing by hedge-rows or banks in the fields, not very far distant from his home, the claw-work of the badger is manifested by sundry routings after roots, and dumbledore nests, of which they are particularly fond. Keepers give them bad names, that they may be allowed to destroy or catch them for the purpose of that most cruel and barbarous of all amusements, badger-baiting, which, although forbidden by law, under Mr. Martin's act, is nevertheless carried on in what is called "sporting houses." The badger, like the fox, prowls about at night in search of food, but he does not, like the fox, ever venture far from the covert-side, and although acquitting him of bloodthirstiness, they will commit depredations on the farmers' produce of peas and beans during the summer and autumn months; but when winter sets in they retire, like the dormouse, to some warm shelter under the earth, where they remain in a half-torpid state, seldom venturing from their comfortable nests of reeds and grass collected in the summer, unless forced out by hunger.

Oliver Goldsmith, in his description of the badger, calls it, "like the fox, a carnivorous animal, and nothing that has life comes amiss to it. It sleeps the greatest part of its time; and thus, without being a voracious feeder, it still keeps fat, particularly in winter." There is also another assertion of his, which carries refutation on the face of it, that

"when surprised by dogs at some distance from its hole, it falls upon its back to defend itself from its enemies," thus exposing its most tender and vulnerable part, which, during our long acquaintance with the badger family, we have always seen them most anxious to protect.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Stub-bred foxes the stoutest runners—Any port in a storm—Terriers —Our old sort—Pilgrim—Bagmen.

Foxes have always a preference for that kind of earth in which they have been bred, for there is a great variety of soil throughout the different fox-hunting countries in the British Isles. In some parts of Essex, however, called the Roothings, there are scarcely any earths, the substratum being a hard, impervious clay, into which even badgers have great difficulty to penetrate. Cubs here are what is called stub-bred, that is, laid up in an old hollow stool or under the roots of decayed trees; sometimes, also, on the bare ground, in gorse-brakes. These foxes, never having been accustomed to seek refuge below the surface, make a long flight, depending solely upon their strength and speed to save them from their enemies, and on this account are said to be the stoutest runners in England. Foxes bred in drains are the most difficult to find, since, if barred out of one they find another very easily, not known to either stopper or keeper; and when lands have been thoroughly drained, with large mains to carry off the water from so many tributaries, it is not a very easy matter to break up one of these, if

permitted to do so. In former years the principal material used for draining was stone, brushwood, and turves, under which foxes could easily make their way and excavate a cavity at the upper end sufficiently large to accommodate themselves and a small family of cubs. Since the introduction of pipes for this purpose, a dry lodgment is not so easily obtained; still, when pressed by hounds, foxes will seek any port in a storm. A few good terriers are of great use to a pack of foxhounds, and we think no kennel complete without them. The white Scotch is the best we have ever known for this purpose, a breed of which had been in our family more than a century, and they were quite perfection in their work; would help to draw covert, and run with the pack, and somehow or other, even in quick bursts, they contrived to be thereabouts at the finish, to have their small share of the spoil; and, if run to ground, we had not long to wait for their assistance in ejecting the fox. Perhaps they were a trifle too hard in the mouth, although never crossed by bull-dog blood, and if they could not bolt they would kill him. Terriers belonging to a foxhound kennel ought to be stanch to fox, and not given to run any other game, for if once permitted to do so, they cannot be depended on; and we have heard of digging to a rabbit, which is the reverse of agreeable on a wintry day, not to mention the disgust a huntsman must feel when making sure of his fox being within reach of his whip, he is still showing his heels above ground. It must not always be taken as a certain conclusion

that when the hounds stop and bay at the mouth of an earth, the fox is within.

Foxes, when heated in the chase, will sometimes enter an earth, and finding the want of air, quit again immediately, or linger about it for a moment or two, and then resume their course; the best plan is to hold the hounds round the earth at once, to see if they can hit the scent beyond, and when a check occurs at farm-buildings to make a regular cast round them, before commencing a search into all the nooks and corners generally found in such places. It is almost hopeless work attempting to dig a fox out of a large head of earths, and the loss of time when feasible must be taken into consideration; unless after a long run and some distance from home, with hounds short of blood, it is best to leave him alone in his glory, and draw for another. Hounds flushed with every-day victories do not care to stand about an earth for half an hour or more, waiting for their victim; they would prefer finding another, and so would the majority of their attendants. Want of blood is not a very common complaint in these days, when foxes come too easily to hand.

Whilst writing about running to ground, a singular instance of sagacity displayed by an old hound, named Pilgrim, occurs to our recollection. It was our practice never to draft or destroy a favourite hound which had done good service during the best portion of his life; and when unable to run up with the pack, he was permitted to run about the premises, having a small lodging-house appro-

priated to himself, under the same roof as the boiling-house. We had brought a fox back to our home coverts, where he went to ground, and the old dog hearing the cry of his quondam companions joined them. Not wishing to dig the fox out, we placed some stones at the mouth of the earth to prevent another getting in, should we find again. This not being the case from drawing the coverts only a few days previously, the hounds were taken home and fed. In the evening, when visiting the kennels, the old hound and two terriers were found missing, and after making fruitless search for them, it occurred to us that Pilgrim might have gone to the earth, and the terriers might still be about the premises, as they were not generally confined to kennel. Upon our reaching the earth, there lay the old hound at its mouth, having scratched away all the stones, and kneeling down we heard the terriers at the fox inside. As these terriers had not been out hunting that day, the mysterious part of the business was, how they had been coaxed by the hound to follow him. The place not being a stronghold, we sent for pickaxe and spade immediately, knowing the fox would be killed if left to the tender mercies of Viper; and great was the delight of Pilgrim when he was dug out and taken home in a sack, to be let loose again at night. When arrived at years of discretion, it was not our practice to turn down bagmen before the hounds, for, strange as it may appear to the uninitiated, the scent of a fox, which has been caught and confined even for a day or two, is so very different to

that of the wild animal unkennelled in his native woods, that good old foxhounds will not hunt or own it, although those accustomed to the thing dash furiously at it. The fact is, that the scent of the bagman is much stronger, without the addition of aniseed or other oils, which are supposed to give a more pungent flavour to fox-meat. Beckford, I think, tells a story of an old orthodox master, whose hounds having been hallooed on to a bag-fox, turned down in a covert he was drawing. He suspected, from the manner of his stanch hounds, some trick had been played; but when the fox was at last run into by the young and wild ones of the pack, not one would attempt to break him up.

"Well, sir," exclaimed the master, addressing the suspected trickster, "you have deceived my huntsman and the whole field, but you cannot deceive my hounds. They know he is a bagman, and won't eat him."

This is no uncommon trick in the present day, to which keepers have recourse to keep up appearances with the master of the hounds. A fox is caught a few days before the advertised fixture for drawing their coverts, and turned down in the morning about an hour previous to the arrival of the pack, so that he gets tolerably clean by brushing through the underwood; yet an experienced master and stanch hounds are never deceived by his artful dodge.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Forming a pack of foxhounds—Entered and unentered drafts—Dog shows—Foxhunters' Club—Weak understandings—Saffron—The tape—Length of body or limb—Stud-hounds—A leaf from the genealogical tree.

THE collecting of a pack of foxhounds is a work of time and labour, as well as attended with great expense; and we believe to purchase an entire pack, when practicable, will prove cheaper in the end. Old drafts are generally composed of faulty hounds, or those unable to run up with the rest; and these last, the only individuals good for anything, are generally good for nothing after one season's work; in fact, their work is done before they are dismissed from their own kennel. Amongst the lot will be found some, perhaps, lame in the stifle, others mute, others noisy; so that out of these fifty or sixty couples of castaways, five or six may hold together, but the great majority of greater use in the orchard, under apple-trees, than in the field.

Whatever huntsmen may say about their entered drafts, their qualifications may be rightly estimated by the price paid for them, as it is not likely a hound worth from ten to twenty pounds would be sold for thirty shillings, unless there were a screw

loose somewhere. The best plan is to get together a large body of young unentered hounds from different kennels. Select some twenty-five or thirty couples of the best blood, in which you will be assisted by the huntsmen from whom they are purchased, and begin working them together as early as possible in the cub-hunting season, so that they may become tolerably steady by Christmas. With such young recruits much cannot be expected for the first two years, in hunting a cold scent; but with a good one they are likely to give a good account of their foxes. What they do will be done brilliantly, all at head; but failing the *sine quâ non*, the *io triumphe* will also be wanting, *i.e.*, scalps easily counted on the kennel door. In their third season these will be a pack of hounds, and their motto, *Labor vincit omnia.*

A brother master and contemporary, some years ago, formed his establishment in this manner, but his country being principally arable with large woods, his sport for the first season was miserable. In the second there was some improvement, and in the third his pack was quite efficient in their work, although not very level or eye-taking. Huntsmen cannot afford to draft clever young hounds, unless of doubtful parentage; and if there is one better looking than others in the whole lot, be sure he is not worth his porridge. It is said that we have reached the height of perfection in breeding foxhounds; and yet at the late Yorkshire Hound Show, representing twenty odd kennels, and containing over eighty couples, the best looking out of each pack, selected,

of course, we are told by a competent authority, there were very few of perfect symmetry, combining all the essential points with plenty of bone and straight fore-legs.

Some twenty years ago we endeavoured, in conjunction with the late Lord Ducie, to establish a show of foxhounds at Tattersall's, during the week of the Epsom or Ascot meeting, and at the same time to form a club of masters and ex-masters, to a committee of whom all disputes as to rights of country should be referred. The difficulties and expenses attendant upon the transit of hounds at that time were, however, considered by those living at long distances from London to be grave obstacles, and the proposal fell to the ground. The case is now altered, from railway communication ; but we are still of opinion that London would be the best place for the show, as more central and easier of access to the majority of masters of foxhounds, and a very large body of sportsmen, who generally pay an annual visit to the mighty Babylon at that season of the year, and would no doubt take great interest in the exhibition of nearly all the finest hounds, selected from the best kennels. Our object also was by means of an admission fee, sufficiently high to exclude the Unwashed, to form a fund which should be applied to the assistance of deserving huntsmen or whippers-in out of place, in reduced circumstances, or disabled by accident or illness. The assembling together of so many masters of foxhounds cannot fail to be beneficial both to themselves and the cause generally. They

have an opportunity there of discussing all matters connected with the "noble science," as well as to discuss the merits of hounds belonging to other kennels. They see before them the cleverest of the entry from numerous packs, and the best stud-hounds, which otherwise they might have no opportunity of seeing; and although we are all prone to make swans of our geese, brother masters are not deficient in candour when questioned as to the peculiar qualities of any hound put forward as something approaching this pattern of excellence. Then the genealogical tree is referred to, from which such fine fruit has been produced, so that the form is before you, the descent explained, and the character unfolded. You cannot know more, except by becoming an eye-witness of the hound's performance in the hunting-field. The post-prandial hour is the time for all these discussions *aperit cum vera precordia Bacchus*. Men's hearts are warmed and expanded, as in old Horace's days, by a few glasses of wine, and they then feel not only in a more communicative but more friendly spirit towards their fellow-men.

The objection to dog shows, where pointers, setters, and other dogs are awarded prizes, chiefly on account of their appearances, without regard to working qualifications, does not apply to foxhounds, except the unentered, inasmuch as faulty ones would not be tolerated in any kennel of high repute, and of course there can be no doubt as to the character and capabilities of a stud-hound which has been used in his own pack. The only

drawback to these exhibitions is that the judges must be guided, when several of this class are subjected to their inspection, by symmetrical proportions rather than by excellence of character; and the best hound, by some trifling deficiency in form or substance, may be rejected in favour of one better looking although less meritorious. The fashion of the age is too much in favour of non-essentials, by which we mean neatness of head and length of neck, with fine shoulders; but these are not indispensables. The framework of the body, depth and width of chest, strength of loins and muscular hind-quarters, ought first to engage our attention. The muscles behind the shoulders should also be prominent, and the fore-legs straight as gun-barrels, standing on good round feet.

We remember a few years since a clever hound in other respects, but weak in the ankles, made use of as a stallion in the north Warwickshire kennel, and on expressing our disapprobation of continuing such a failing, the huntsman pleaded his many good qualities, saying it would not be seen in his progeny, of which he had several just come into kennel from their walks. Our reply was that we should like to judge for ourselves by having his children paraded before us on the flags, which, being complied with, we pointed out to him in all save one the weak point of their father. This hound, whose name we cannot now call to mind—a pretty sure proof that he did not take a hold upon our fancy—was a nicely-topped, fashionable-looking dog, head and tail well up, with swan neck and fine

shoulders, but deficient in his understanding. About the same time we noticed a hound named Saffron, in the old Warwickshire pack, which has held a place in our memory ever since, being one of the most powerful our eyes have rested upon. Saffron, however, was not quite the fashion as to appearances, having a square head, rather short neck, and not very oblique shoulders, capital forelegs, with plenty of bone, big chest, and muscular loins and hind-quarters. There were also two daughters of his presented to our view, exceedingly handsome, attractive young ladies, with better forehands than their sire, to one of which the first prize had been awarded by Jem Hills, a judge; and several of his descendants are still to be seen in the Badminton and other kennels of repute.

The tape has been pooh-poohed as rather an unsportsmanlike way of testing the powers of a foxhound; but in our opinion no satisfactory conclusion can be formed without its assistance, when making comparison one with the other.

A quick eye will detect at a glance any imperfection in the shape or make of limbs and body, but the tape gives at once the dimensions behind the shoulders, where the chief strength of a hound lies; and it will be found that, as a general rule, this measurement is just four times as great as that of the arm. If the arm measures seven inches, the body will be twenty-eight. In deciding be-

tween two or more hounds of apparently equal power, due consideration must be given to the condition of each. Those full of flesh will, of course, measure more than those of less bulky proportions. Judges of hounds, horses, and cattle, have very often a difficult task to perform, and generally a very unpleasant one, since it is impossible to please all parties. Some must win, others lose, yet everybody expects to win, like the drawers of lottery tickets. Sometimes we have been puzzled to which the palm of merit ought to be awarded, although looking over in the course of a season hundreds of couples. One hound may possess all the essential points in great perfection, and yet not have sufficient length of body to quite please our fancy. Another may make up for the deficiency by length and strength of loins, and prove not so powerful behind the shoulders, and with less bone. As to horses and hounds, we all know they must have length to go the pace, and those with short bodies generally have that length of leg which is not conducive to speed. There is a greater objection, however, to short-bodied animals of the female kind, and their incapacity on that account of producing fine progeny. In judging hounds from various kennels, *cæteris paribus*, pedigree should be thrown into the scale, and turn it in favour of high descent; and at foxhound shows, when stud-hounds are exhibited, they should be accompanied with a leaf from the genealogical tree to prove their parentage. Blood will tell in

the long run, and masters of the old school were very particular in never breeding from hounds which were not stout and good in every other respect, not paying much attention to fashionable appearances. After all that can be said or done, blood is the thing, and never ought to be lost sight of.

CHAPTER XXX.

Expenses of foxhunting establishments—Large and small packs—Scratch lot of harriers kept cost free—Farming and foxhunting—Touring with an agriculturist—A dip in blue water—Master growing his stud as well as his corn—Gentlemen huntsmen.

The expenses of foxhunting establishments will necessarily depend upon the number of men, horses, and hounds kept to hunt the country, some of which are still so extensive as to admit of six days a week during the season. Different men have different opinions in regard to this matter; some like to hunt every day, others are content to indulge in that recreation two or three days only out of the seven; and for ourselves, we could never see any great fun in making of pleasure a toil. There is, however, the peculiarity attached to foxhunting more than to any other sport,—it is ever varying, scarcely two days throughout the season being alike as to results,—besides which, man being a sociable animal, the meeting with friends at the covert-side proves a great attraction. To noblemen and masters of great wealth, expenditure is of little consequence, and large establishments are of great benefit to the locality in which they are situated, by giving employment to numerous hands; but the quiet master with his two-days-per-week pack has equal, if not

greater, enjoyment of the chase, and with experience may manage his establishment pleasantly and economically. For his two days a week, with an occasional bye, twenty-five couples of hounds are sufficient, seventeen, or at most eighteen, being quite enough to bring into the field, thus having a reserve in kennel of seven couples, for accidents or other contingencies. Every hound ought to work two days at least in the week, to keep him in proper condition and wind, and young ones cannot well have too much. To hunt two days or four is far preferable to the odd numbers of three and five, which throw a pack out of order. Tuesday and Saturday are the most convenient, so that if sport on the first day is bad, a short bye on Thursday will set them right, and then the pack will be quite ready for Saturday again. If hounds have long distances to travel on foot before reaching their places of meeting, that also must be taken into account, since late hours and long days take nearly as much out of hounds and horses as sharp work, with a quick return to kennel or stable.

The cost of keeping twenty-five couples of hounds may be easily reckoned, as one pound of dry oatmeal is, on an average, the daily allowance to a middle-sized hound, which, when boiled and mixed with flesh and broth, will be found ample. The price of horse-flesh varies very much with the locality, the highest never exceeding a sovereign, and one horse is sufficient to give a good supply of beef for a week. In the neighbourhood of large

towns, where horse-flesh is used as cats'-meat,—and, for all we know to the contrary, converted into sausages,—the demand for this commodity is generally so great that few find their way to the kennel; but near smaller country towns, and in coal districts, the rejected of the equine race are so numerous, that they are disposed of at almost any price, and those dying from disease, or killed by accidents, are quite unsaleable. We were assured by an owner of a scratch lot of harriers, occupying a few acres of land, who did also a little in the butchering, and other trades besides, that he positively kept his hounds for *nil*, for feeding them on flesh all the year round. His account was that he gave eight shillings for the horse, selling the skin and bones for this sum; and at the present time we know of another lot of hounds which, from the number of horses, living and dead, brought to their kennel, are maintained at a very trifling expense; and need scarcely mention that the bill for oatmeal does not form a very heavy item in the yearly expenditure of this establishment.

If, indifferent as to appearances and condition, hounds in such favoured districts may be kept at a very moderate cost, and if the owner is also a cultivator of the soil, the kennel may stand on the creditor side of his ledger. The master who farms has unquestionably a great advantage in this respect, by the manure from kennel and stable, particularly the former. The produce of his land is wonderfully increased, and, of course, this ought to

be debited in his establishment in place of guano or other artificial manures now so extensively used. These act rather as stimulants than strengthening to the soil, afford it no permanent improvement, and are chiefly employed in the cultivation of root crops, whereas a proper dressing of kennel manure will leave its mark upon the land for years.

Having been a farmer as well as foxhunter, we can attest the accuracy of this; in fact, a few years after the commencement of our career as M. F. H., we were forced into the farming line rather against our inclination, by the tenant of the home farm so mismanaging his land, taking everything out of it and putting very little in, that the necessity was laid upon us of taking it into our own hands, or letting it to another for a mere song. We adopted the former course, upon the recommendation of a first-class agriculturist in the neighbourhood; but having no practical knowledge of the business, we pressed our friend into a farming tour, to see how things were done in other counties. At that time Sussex had obtained great notoriety for its breeders of Southdown sheep, and this sort being considered the best to work poor land into condition, thither we bent our steps, and were gratified with a sight of the Duke of Richmond's and the late celebrated Ellman's beautiful flocks, from which our stock were subsequently descended, with a cross of the Wiltshire down, an animal of larger frame, and better adapted to folding than the highest bred Southdowns.

In the course of our travels we had called at various homesteads tenanted by extensive and scientific agriculturists, of whose good cheer we occasionally availed ourselves in furtherance of our object, "to get understanding," as Solomon has it. The style in which these men lived took us rather by surprise at first, imagining in our innocence or ignorance that good strong home-brewed ale for dinner, and a glass of grog afterwards to top up with, might be the *ultima Thule* of their desires. Great, then, was our surprise at the appearance of champagne and sherry during the dinner hour, succeeded by really good port and claret, which could do violence to no man's feelings. The table also literally groaned under the viands placed upon it. Being an inland district, fish was unattainable, but soup really good; and at one hospitable house, we had a round of boiled beef, with *two couples* of roasted fowls on one dish, placed before half a dozen down-sitters. Not being over particular as to eatable or drinkables, the pleasing task of ordering dinner at the various inns on the road where we halted for the night was assigned to our companion, who, strange to say, selected the produce of the farmyard in preference to that of the field. Having treated us two days in succession to this dish, we asked, on the third, what he intended should be set before us that evening. "If you have no objection, sir," was his reply, "there is nothing nicer than a pair of fowls and a piece of bacon."

"Toujours perdrix!" we exclaimed in surprise;

"why, we thought you had been tired of eating poultry at home."

"Oh, no! I always prefer it to beef, mutton, or pork."

"Well, then, you shall have it again tomorrow if you like, but now, being in Brighton, we will order some fish, and a hind-quarter of veritable South-down lamb."

From Brighton we journeyed down to Bognor, where we were treated to the finest prawns for breakfast we ever beheld, and of which my travelling companion having freely partaken, we proposed a walk to some ruins by the seaside. "Well," we cried, after examining them, "the sea-water looks very inviting; a swim out and in will do us a power of good, and here is a nice little nook where our vestments may be deposited in safety while we are out at sea."

"Thank you," he replied, very demurely, "for the suggestion, but I have always preferred land to water, as I do poultry to butcher's meat; and I'm not at all certain that were I even to venture out to sea, I should ever see land again."

As no persuasions could induce him to take a dip in the briny deep, we availed ourselves of the opportunity to have a taste of salt water, our friend sitting down on the ruins to watch our clothes and proceedings. Upon our return to Bognor, the waiter at the hotel informed us that we had chosen the most dangerous place on that line of coast for bathing, which afforded our agricultural friend

great cause for rejoicing in his prudent resolve never to entrust himself to the deep blue sea, except attended by a bathing machine and a couple of old women. It has been said or sung that,

> "Men to distant regions roam,
> To bring politer manners home."

We don't remember exactly whether any such improvement resulted from our visits to sheep-farmers, although of a very superior class, but we returned wiser in regard to the line of business we were compelled to pursue, and, assisted by our hydrophobic friend, commenced our novitiate as a tiller of the soil under the most unfavourable circumstances. Being a bit of an economist, however, we thought to grow a sufficient quantity of oats for the hunter's stable from a field of some twenty acres, which, at a moderate calculation, ought to have produced at least two hundred sacks; but, to our disgust, two hundred bushels were not forthcoming, so impoverished had the land become; and, seeing it impossible to grow cereals, we resolved to begin with roots and food for sheep only. Now the effect of the kennel and stable manure became very apparent, and we compounded also with the feeder for his perquisites—the horse-bones. By means of these fertilizers, the land soon recovered from its forlorn condition, and in a few years the produce was nearly doubled: also the grass-land, hitherto barely yielding a ton per acre, carried two. We have entered into these particulars to show that farming and foxhunting ought to go hand in hand

together, where the master has land of his own, or can rent it at a fair price, since by growing his oats and hay, instead of paying for everything in hard cash, he will certainly effect a great saving, and so much ought to be credited to kennel and stable for extra returns. According to usual custom, hay, when consumed on the premises, is valued at three pounds per ton only, sometimes less; but if forced to the hay-market, the master will have to give five, if not six—often more. For this one item, therefore, there will be a saving of one-half. Oatmeal may also be manufactured at home, although requiring more time and trouble than we thought worth bestowing upon it, and we considered the Irish and Scotch preferable to the English.

To hunt two days per week, with an occasional bye, three horses to each man are more than sufficient, and, barring accidents, two better than three, since one day a week, unless with severe work, would not keep a horse in racing condition. It is of great advantage in all foxhunting establishments, large or small, to have young horses coming in as the old ones are going out, which can be used on bye days and light days, when four or five years old, preparatory to regular work the following seasons; and if occupying land, a master ought to grow his stud, as well as corn and hay, for the use of his establishments. Having adopted this plan, we were so satisfied with our brood mares, that we recommend the same course to others. Three or four of these, with good sheds to protect them in cold

weather, and running over any rough pastures during the summer, take nothing out of the pocket, and their produce, when past three years, may, not improbably, be worth three figures, provided the mothers are nearly, if not quite thorough bred, with frames suited for hunters. It will, of course, make the difference of one man if the master hunts his own hounds; and our opinion was, that half the fun consisted in handling the horn: then, as to the whippers-in, one, where economy is to be the rule, may suffice; but he must possess "all the talents," and be, like Sambo, here, there, and everywhere.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Subdivision of overgrown countries conducive to sport—Leadenhall foxes—Rights of country—"Mos pro lege"—Foxhunting the fashion—The king of sportsmen—The late Sir Wheeler Cuffe and clipping—Neutral coverts.

The lavish expenditure upon foxhunting establishments in the present day has induced us to point out how these may be curtailed, and by so doing we have reason to think that we are doing good service to the noble science. The magnitude of many establishments must deter men of moderate means from embarking in such hazardous enterprises, and although hitherto rich masters have been found willing to undertake the management, rather from love of notoriety than love of sport, yet when the novelty of the thing wears off they are not sorry to retire from a situation involving more trouble than pleasure. So much is sacrificed now to pomp and parade, everything must be in apple-pie order, and not only so, for of the *lucidus ordo* we complain not, but in more than apple-pie order in excess of all necessary order—a superabundance of hounds, whose numbers militate against their performances, and so little worked that their good or bad qualities cannot fairly be tested. Masters and huntsmen, with their second and third horses in the field, serving only as an excuse for

keeping a stud of bad ones. It is an established fact that the better the condition by training and exercise, the better fitted for hard work are men, horses, and hounds, and less liable to suffer from blows and injuries. A man accustomed to walk or ride so many hours in the day can undergo almost any amount of toil with comparative ease, his muscles and body being in a healthy state, and we know by experience how soon the whole corporeal frame gets out of order by inactivity. There was a remark in the old posting days, "What becomes of post-boys and donkeys?" from never hearing of the one or the other paying the debt of nature. Huntsmen also and whippers-in generally live to a green old age. The two celebrated masters of hounds, Assheton Smith and Osbaldeston, attained each their eightieth year; and no two men ever worked so hard in the saddle for the greater part of their lives. And we find as no uncommon case, that the larger the country hunted by one master, the less the sport, simply because foxes are not routed about sufficiently, and, being out of condition, fall an easy prey to their pursuers. The subdivision of over-grown countries has always, as far as sport is concerned, been attended with beneficial results; and we can name several which within our recollection formerly occupied by one pack of hounds, find plenty of room for two now.

The Warwickshire, divided a few years since into North and South; the Craven, a large slice of which was handed over to the late Squire of Tedworth some thirty years ago; and, more recently, Mr.

Farquharson's in Dorsetshire, which now affords occasional employment to three establishments. Under the old *régime* a larger extent of country was monopolized than could be sufficiently hunted during the season. The big woods or forests were resorted to only in the early autumn for cub-hunting, or late in the spring to wind up with a May fox. Now this course is decidedly antagonistic to good sport. The big woods, from being so seldom disturbed, foxes would of course resort to, and there remain secure from molestation the greater part of the year. Then what was the use of them? They might as well be underground for any sport they afforded, and, as "Satan always finds some work for idle hands to do," probably they would, during their long vacation, acquire mischievous habits by purloining farmers' poultry where rabbits were not in sufficient supply. Bad, lazy, Leadenhall foxes are the very worst of all the vulpine race, and like black sheep in any community, aristocratical, clerical, mercantile, or *quocunque nomine gaudent*, bring discredit upon the class of society to which they belong. We have always regarded a bad fox in the same light as a mad dog, and although short enough, and too short, of the animal in our own country, our advice to farmers was invariably to "kill every brute of that sort you find prowling about your farmyard." Those foxes which rob hen roosts are either half tame, from being housed too long as cubs before turned loose, or mangy. The sooner they are disposed of the better, and

there is no excuse for such depredations when game and rabbits are plentiful. Good wild foxes avoid the haunts of men, rarely venturing near farm-houses or villages.

There are certain rights of country, however, which every master is expected to maintain inviolate against incursions from another pack; and not to suffer these to be infringed is, whilst he is in office, part of his duty. There is no law for foxhunting; in fact, the law of the land is against any man trespassing upon others' property, but the *mos pro lege* has been found sufficiently obligatory, and, as a general rule, one master rarely interferes with a brother master's prerogative. Disputes have arisen as to the boundaries, where outlying coverts have been conceded by the master of one hunt to another many years previously, without stipulations of any kind; but in this case, when those coverts have been hunted for a length of time by hounds belonging to another hunt, and with the consent of the proprietors of the land, we consider if the original right was not entirely to be abandoned, the coverts would have been occasionally drawn to keep up the title to them. This can only occur in certain families of distinction, who have obtained the privilege of hunting a certain district from time immemorial, supporting their establishments nearly, if not entirely, at their own expense—in short, independent masters; but as this cannot be considered as entailed property, even in a foxhunting point of view, the heir to his own estate must abide by his father's or grandfather's decision in parting

with any portion, and without reservation in writing it cannot be reclaimed. The proprietors of coverts have also an undoubted right, supposing them to be inefficiently and irregularly hunted, to offer such coverts to a neighbouring master.

In bygone times, in the days of Noel, Meynell, and Corbett, foxhunting establishments were so few and far between, and foxes so scarce from the prices set upon their heads as vermin, that immense tracts of country were occupied by one master of hounds, and at that time barely sufficed to find employment for one pack. But as the love of foxhunting increased, and in consequence the preservation of foxes, the extended area of country, then considered only sufficient for the maintenance of one establishment, became evidently too large for monopoly, and thus necessarily and fortunately subdivisions have taken place, to suit the temper and requirements of the age we live in. The pressure of public opinion has also exercised a very proper influence in this matter, since

> "Those now hunt who ne'er did hunt before,
> And those who hunted love to hunt the more."

The fact is, that foxhunting has become exceedingly fashionable of late years. It tends greatly to the amusement of those who are bound, willingly or unwillingly, to spend certain months of the year—and those the most dreary—in their country quarters. Shooting is all very well in its way; battue shooting, the tamest of all; duck and snipe shooting the wettest of all; the billiard table, a *dernier ressort* in bad weather; but without foxhunting, the

exhilarating sport of foxhunting, the reunions at the covert side, in place of reunions at certain clubs in London, what would become of half the people who are obliged to winter in the country? We are now writing of genuine sportsmen, or foxhunters of the old school, who went out hunting for the sake of the hunting; not of those who adopt this mode of recreation rather from necessity than choice, and some of whom would probably be found administering to themselves certain doses of prussic acid during the dreary month of November, were not the first of that month inaugurated as the commencement of the foxhunting season, when every man is supposed to be in proper trim himself, and to have his stud of hunters in proper condition to meet the hounds in the field. *Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.* Foxhunting is the fashion—it is enough, all press into it.

We are told that when the great Mr. Meynell (and great he certainly was, in more senses than one) first commenced his hunting career in Leicestershire, without possessing an acre in it, that he was supported by only two subscribers, Lord R. Cavendish and Mr. Boothby. But it is evident from his being called "the king of sportsmen," that he had derived that title as a first-rate master of hounds, and moreover he could not have hunted that country as a stranger, had not his conduct as a gentleman ensured him the support and approbation of the whole country. Two lines of the old Coplow hunt song occur to us here,—

"Talk of horses and hounds, and system of kennel,
Give me Leicestershire nags, and the hounds of old Meynell."

We learnt many particulars relative to Mr. Meynell and his establishment from a very old friend, who had hunted with him in his early days, and who could not say too much in his praise; and, if we remember rightly, notwithstanding the number of hounds in kennel, with such an extent of country, he seldom hunted more than three days in the week, and it was not then the fashion to have second horses in the field. Sir Wheeler Cuffe also, it appears from his own account, was the first man who introduced clipping, or, as he called it, "shaving horses." His stud being reduced by hard work or accidents, he was told of a good hunter then running loose in a farmyard (having been disabled the previous season), but now quite sound, although with a coat like a bear. A bargain having been struck with his present owner, he was transferred to the baronet's stable, who, to bring him quickly into hunting trim, hit upon the novel expedient of first cutting off all the long hair, and then sending for the village barber, to lather and shave him all over excepting the head and legs; and he used to relate with great glee that, although well known before in the hunt, he was not recognized by even his former master after this metamorphosis, his colour having been quite changed. Sir Wheeler had been a first flightman in Leicestershire, and he was not only a genuine foxhunter, but an observer of the working of the hounds, and the lessons taught him early in life by the father of foxhunting were treasured up in his mind with great care, and proved of much service to us when commencing our career as

M.F.H., when he generally paid us an annual visit during the hunting season. Even at that time, having reached the age of man, he could still make a good fight across country.

Since the time of old Meynell, we need scarcely remark that, to meet the spirit of the age, great changes have taken place in that part of Leicestershire, which at one time he might almost have claimed as his own; in fact, the country has been divided and parcelled out by the proprietors to suit their convenience. There are, in some foxhunting countries, also some woods called neutral coverts, a sort of "no man's land," which two packs claim the right of drawing, and this debatable ground too often gives rise to disputations and disagreements destructive to that harmony which ought to exist between two neighbouring masters of foxhounds. We believe we have already mentioned that no one master has a right to dig a fox out from a stronghold in another's country, or to send forward a whipper-in to stop the earths there, and the more particular we are in regard to the etiquette observed upon these and other occasions, the more shall we conduce to the interests of the "noble science."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"In ancient times, when Rome with Athens vied
For polish'd luxury and useful arts;
All hot and reeking from the Olympic strife,
And warm Palestra, in the tepid bath
Th' athletic youth relax'd their wearied limbs.
Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful powers
Of nard and cassia fraught, to soothe and heal
The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime
Not much invites us to such arts as these.
Tis not for those whom gelid skies embrace,
And chilling fogs, whose perspiration feels
Such frequent bars from Eurus and the North—
'Tis not for these to cultivate the skin
Too soft."—ARMSTRONG.

Turkish baths—Warm baths for hounds—More bad than good results from their use—System of kennel—Originated with "The Father of the Chase"—The master's eye—The late Lord Ducie and Bondsman.

TURKISH Baths are all the fashion in the present day, and supposed to afford a panacea for all the maladies to which humanity is subject. To a certain extent, and under certain circumstances, their beneficial effect cannot be disputed; but the customs and habits of Eastern countries cannot be adopted in more northern latitudes as a general rule of practice. Turks are as a nation indolent and inactive, and the bath is one of the greatest luxuries, to which they resort daily, as a refreshing relief from Eastern dust and heat, and those who have tried the experiment in this country ex-

perience great relief from the softening influence of warm vapour, with the accompanying rubbing and shampooing, which latter claim half the battle. Warm water—not hot—has been used for many years past as the most effectual means of subduing inflammation from wounds, inflicted upon man, horse, or hound, and if persevered in for a certain time, has been known to effect a cure without the aid of other applications. In rheumatism, gout, and other complaints of a like nature, and in certain cases of fever, it may be resorted to with good effect; but as an every-day resource, particularly in a cold climate, such as ours, the Turkish bath must be productive of very debilitating effects. Cold water, not warm, is the thing for natives of the British Isles in a state of health, and tends to invigorate the corporeal frame. An occasional warm bath may be used, as the most effectual means of opening and cleansing the pores of the skin, and the sensation derived from it is of a very pleasurable nature. After severe fatigue it has always been found a great restorative. The late Assheton Smith assured us that on his return from a hard day's hunting, he could not have eaten a morsel of dinner without plunging into his warm bath. Without the rubbing perfectly dry afterwards, however, the effect would be rather prejudicial than otherwise, and here is the difficulty with regard to bathing hounds after hunting when they come home draggled and dirty, for in fine weather no one would think of washing them.

The warm bath was constantly used in many

kennels some thirty years ago, but unless great care and attention were bestowed upon the treatment of the hounds whilst undergoing and after the process, more bad than good results followed. We tried it ourselves for some time, but were at last obliged to give it up, from shortness of hands to do the work effectually. The theory is good, but the practice inadequate to carry out the system. When hounds return to their kennel draggled, dirty, and bruised from hard exertions, we know perfectly well that a bath of warm water and broth is the most certain to assuage all irritability from wounds inflicted by briers and thorns, and by removing the dirt adhering to their bodies, the greatest of palliatives to the corporeal frame; but unless each individual can be rubbed thoroughly dry after this operation, the object we have in view must be frustrated. With human bodies, the case is very different; they are not hirsute animals, and their bodies can be completely cleaned, and made dry and comfortable in a few seconds; by using a good rough towel, no dampness remains upon the skin, and the pores from friction are opened; but unless the same process can be adopted with hounds, unless every hair upon their bodies can be separated and worked from dampness into a dry and glowing state, the experiment will not only prove fruitless, but detrimental to health.

To show its inconsistency, we must refer to the *modus operandi*, set forth by an eminent writer and clever master of foxhounds, who suggests that the hounds should be plunged into these warm broth

baths immediately on their return to kennel, and when emerging reeking from their bath, they should be immediately fed, then turned out for a short time into their airing-yard, and then into their dormitory for the night. Now this course is manifestly inconsistent. To subject any animal, biped or quadruped, when reeking-hot from a warm bath, to a cold wintry atmosphere, can be productive only of the worst results, by throwing a sudden chill upon its body, and entirely neutralizing the good effects supposed to accrue from warm water. The wooden boxes in general use for this purpose were of oblong shape, and of sufficient length to admit two hounds back to back, and deep enough to immerse the whole body, except the head, under water. In these baths the hounds were placed for a few seconds, whilst their attendants were rubbing the dirt off with scrubbing-brushes, and then after being fed they were allowed to lick themselves dry, without being dried by hand. This was one of our chief objections to the process, for we could not see any benefit likely to follow from hounds licking off dirty broth from each other, and dirty to a certain extent it always would be, unless they were taken out of one bath and placed into another of cleaner water; and the time thus occupied in doing the thing properly and efficiently, washing clean eighteen couples of hounds, may be imagined as antagonistic to the working out of the system, with their huntsman ravenous for his own dinner. Under such circumstances the benefit derived was very questionable. Our plan differed from this. We

made use of a more shallow bath, the water only reaching half-way up, and not covering the body; and when the dirt adhering to their bellies and legs was thoroughly washed off, they were quickly rubbed dry by two pairs of hands, each man having a thick woollen cloth for that purpose, the huntsman standing by to see if there were any thorns or wounds about their limbs and feet. The hounds were then fed under cover, and not allowed to go out into the yard, but immediately let into their sleeping-room, with a profusion of clean dry wheat-straw, in which they buried themselves, huddling all together for greater warmth. It is a great advantage when the lodging-room can be heated by hot air from the boiling-house copper, since nothing restores animals suffering from fatigue and cold like a moderate degree of heat.

The system of kennel is said to have originated with Mr. Meynell, who, whether returning late or early from the hunting-field, superintended the feeding of his hounds before preparing to sit down to his own dinner, and as according to the old adage, "The master's eye maketh the horse fat," no doubt the hounds benefited by his attention to their proper feeding. It is too much the practice in our time to entrust the entire management and care of the kennel to the huntsman, and the stable to the head groom. But however trustworthy and talented such men may be, every master of foxhounds would do well to imitate the praiseworthy example set them by the "Father of the chase." Admitting the perfect sufficiency of the two first officials, the

master's eye cannot fail to produce a good effect upon all the subordinates. Servants may give themselves airs, and be disobedient or inattentive to the orders of higher servants, but they would not dare to question those of their employer, whom they know also to be thoroughly acquainted with the management of horses and hounds. To be respected and served willingly, not merely with eye-service, the master must be a practical man himself, and take a lively interest in everything connected with his establishment. He must be fond of his hounds and horses, deeply interested in their welfare and comfort, and resolute in seeing his commands and wishes carried out to their fullest extent. He must be a prime minister over all, and although adopting the *suaviter in modo* course, it must be the *fortiter in re* also—implicit attention to his directions the rule to all in authority under him.

The even condition of the pack depends entirely upon judicious careful feeding, and, as we have before remarked, the huntsman being like the hounds, hungry after a long day, they may be fed too quickly, the greedy getting too much, and the delicate appetites too little; in fact, just as we feel ourselves after over hard work, indisposed to eat at all. It is very often the case that the lightest feeders are the heaviest workmen, some half-dozen doing more towards killing their fox than all the rest put together, and from these extra exertions, called forth by the spirit within them, they exhaust themselves more than the *gourmands* of whom the body of the

pack is composed, and we have remarked the same thing with horses.

We remember, some years ago, sending a very excellent hound to the late Lord Ducie, a trifle out of the rectangular as to form, but in all other respects perfect as to work, and his observation after the probation of one season.

"Your dog Boudsman does more for me in two hours, when we are in difficulties, than the whole pack for one day, and therefore I cannot afford to part with him, although, as you told me, he is a three-cornered one."

What he meant by a three-cornered one is, that he was a little out at elbows, and rather flat-sided, which imperfections are not suggestive of a hound's capability to endure the silvery rays of the moon, one which would not challenge his enemy the fox, in the words of the old song,—

"Oh! meet me by moonlight alone!"

We would rather measure work by its merits than by the day. One labourer will do more in six hours than another in twelve. So it is with hounds. There have been two opinions as to the state, warm or cold, of food given to hounds. It is fortunate that both are right in the two seasons of the year—cold may be given during the summer months, when the hounds are lying idle, but in winter, especially after hunting, there can be no doubt that hot broth, mixed with oatmeal and meat, is the most proper and nutritious; besides which, warm food goes much further than cold. A hungry man will devour almost any quantity of cold boiled beef, of

which, when hot, a very few slices would suffice for his dinner, and although—

> "While winter chills the blood, and binds the veins,
> No labours are too hard,"

yet the body requires heating, or warming, after them. Light feeders require humouring with the best of the trough, more meat and richer broth than the others; neither will they eat much when tired, therefore it is wiser to give them a little at first, and about two hours after to offer more, when the stomach has regained its tone for digestion. Although the example set by Mr. Meynell, and other eminent masters of foxhounds since his time, in seeing to the feeding of their hounds, is worthy of imitation, yet it is not an absolute duty, and if so considered, few would undertake it. To one really fond of his hounds it becomes a pleasure rather than a penance; and the old masters who adopted this course pursued it more from the gratification it afforded them than from actual necessity, when they had trustworthy servants under them. Some have imagined dogs to be more attached to their owners through this means, which may be called "cupboard love," at best, not very gratifying; but dogs will attach themselves from another cause—kind treatment; and they soon discover the difference between their feeder and their master.

We have known many masters to whom their hounds exhibited every token of affection, who never fed but hunted them only, of whom one was the late Assheton Smith, and the welcome with which they greeted him at the place of meeting, or

when paying a visit to the kennel, certainly arose from exuberant feelings called forth by his presence amongst them. There is another cause also: dogs like those who assist them in their hunting, and contribute to their amusement; and hounds, when let loose from the kennel and control of whippers-in feel, we may suppose, like boys rushing out of school on a holiday, to enjoy their games and relaxations beyond the authority of tutors and ushers. Very much depends upon the motives by which masters of hounds are actuated. Some love hunting for the sake of hunting—others love hunting for the sake of their hounds,—in short, make pets of them as ladies do of lap-dogs—attend to their feeding, and see that they are reposing comfortably on their beds before leaving the kennel. Such care is to them no trouble, and we need scarcely add, that masters of this nature enjoy to a greater extent than others more lukewarm the pleasures of the chase.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Hydrophobia—Length of time the virus lies dormant in the system—Our feeder.

Of all maladies to which dogs are subject, the most fatal is madness, for which we believe up to this time no certain cure has been discovered. The origin of this dreadful disease is enveloped in mystery, although it has existed for many centuries, defying the medical skill of age after age. In this country the most favourable seasons for its appearance are during the spring and autumn months; and we know from experience the virus will remain dormant in the system for weeks, months, and even years, until roused by some exciting cause. This we know to be a fact, but it does not follow, as a matter of course, that hydrophobia must be produced in every case by the bite of a mad dog. It may be now, as it undoubtedly was originally, spontaneous,—caused by ill-treatment, confinement without sufficient air or exercise, want of water, exposure to the heat of the sun without shade, or introduced into the system by some other means with which we are unacquainted.

Some years ago we had a large yard-dog, a cross between Newfoundland and mastiff, chained to a box in the stable-yard by night, but allowed his freedom

by day, when he generally accompanied the children and their nurse walking. After the hunting season, we left home for a few days at the end of April, to see the Royal Stag-hounds in the New Forest, having given particular orders to the feeder to see that the dog was supplied with fresh water every day, the weather being sultry. Our horror may be imagined when, on our return home, we were told that the dog had gone mad, and had, it was supposed, bitten several of the hounds and terriers running about the premises. The account given us was, that he had not been let loose to take his usual walk for three or four days following, and that when he was unchained by the boy, he jumped about him as usual, although it was noticed by the nurse that his mouth was covered with foam. Upon the child pushing him away, he ran straight for a pond, dashed into it, and then ran round by the green-yard, where the young hounds were lying about, and was seen by the feeder snapping at them through the palings. These things being reported to our better half, orders were immediately issued to have the dog placed in a secure outhouse, and there kept till our return. The third night, however, he died raving mad, having torn everything to pieces within his reach. Most providentially no injury had been done to the children, and for the coming trial with the hounds we were now fully prepared.

The immediate cause of this dog's madness never could be ascertained. Servants will not tell tales of each other, but we received a hint from one, that during two days, very warm and sultry, the feeder

had neglected to give him water, and he had not been let loose. No mad dog had been heard of in the neighbourhood, and therefore we attributed his sudden attack to this cause. We regard it, in short, as spontaneous hydrophobia. On the third day after this dog's death, two of the young hounds —very valuable ones—showing symptoms of the malady, they were immediately taken from the kennel and placed by themselves in a loose-box within the stable, the window being left quite open, to admit the free circulation of air, and these I resolved to watch and wait upon myself, to see if any remedy could be found to ameliorate their deplorable condition. We had then a very clever surgeon and general medical practitioner belonging to our hunt, whose assistance and advice were at once solicited, and as readily accorded; but previously to his arrival we deemed it prudent to administer a strong dose of laudanum to the afflicted hounds, as the only means of subduing the paroxysms incident to this malady. The laudanum produced the effect we expected—the hounds became drowsy and listless —they made no effort to bite each other, and were as quiet and peaceable as if nothing were wrong. They recognized me when approaching, and patting their heads, wagged their tails, and then again lay down to rest—that rest from which they never more awoke in this world—the slumber of death. The doctor came after these two hounds had breathed their last. I told him what I had done.

"You have done madly enough," was his reply,

"how could you think of giving any medicine to mad dogs?"

"You have heard," we said, "that there is some method in madness?"

"True; but that is a madness quite different to hydrophobia. If one of these hounds had bitten you whilst administering these doses of laudanum, nothing could have saved your life, and no medicine with which I am acquainted can save the life of any other hounds which may be attacked in a similar manner. Many nostrums and quack medicines have been prescribed by enthusiasts as certain remedies in this most melancholy malady, but not one upon which any man of common sense could pin his faith. Physicians and surgeons are all alike in the dark on this incomprehensible visitation. We may subdue the paroxysms but we can do no more; and the best and only advice I can offer you is to destroy every dog which exhibits signs of hydrophobia."

It did not suit our humour then to follow the doctor's advice. Other hounds were seized, and as we had discovered they never showed any disposition to bite their master, we continued giving them laudanum and prussic acid, in the hope of alleviating their agony, if not of curing the disease. In the former we succeeded—not in the latter. One by one they died away, curled up as if asleep, but without any suffering. We had now lost fourteen hounds, some of our finest young bitches, by this terrible scourge, and as no new cases had appeared for a month, began to congratulate ourselves upon

the safety of the others. A second month passed, and we then felt secure, although still feeding them ourselves, and watching them carefully at other times.

Just nine weeks after the first outbreak we noticed a young hound chop at his food in an unusual manner, and he was immediately removed to a safe place where he was seized soon after, and died mad on the fourth morning. Neither my whipper-in nor feeder had remarked this dog's manner when eating, and save for my presence and suspicious supervision, the whole pack would assuredly have been destroyed.

I had, however, more serious cause of alarm on account of the feeder, who in taking this hound to the hospital, had most rashly caught him by the neck, when the dog, naturally savage, turned round and bit him through his naked arm, since, in defiance of our orders, he would still go about his work as usual, with his arms bare up to the shoulders. The blood flowing freely from the wound, we had his arm immersed in warm water to encourage the bleeding, and when it ceased, made him suck the wound until quite clear of blood, and then applied some lunar caustic. The doctor was of course sent for immediately, who approved our treatment, and said he could do nothing more except cauterizing or cutting out the bitten part, which he thought, after the caustic, would be of little use. To make assurance however, doubly sure, the part was cauterized; but the unfortunate feeder felt very much alarmed about himself, though we did and said everything we

could to prevent too great excitement, and we verily believed from the course we had so promptly pursued the virus would not have penetrated into his system.

He was now in the hands of the surgeon, who gave him the medicines he considered right, and the next day his arm was in a frightful state of inflammation, when drawing poultices were resorted to, until all the inflammatory symptoms had subsided. The ominous three days passed away—three weeks —three months—and yet no appearance of hydrophobia, and he began to think he was tolerably safe. But as some of his friends had been talking to him about sea-dipping, he said, "I think, sir, I should now feel quite comfortable in my mind if I had a good washing in sea-water."

"Certainly, George," was our reply, "you shall have that or anything else you fancy—but my candid opinion is, now, that you cannot go mad, as you call it, if you wished to do so."

Well, he had sea-dipping. We sent our first whipper-in down with him to Weymouth, to see all fair; but by the advice of the blue-jackets employed on the occasion—who had got certain crotchets into their heads, that a man in his case ought to be thoroughly saturated with the briny fluid—he was very nearly drowned outright by the operation, since they ducked him and ducked him *malgré* his cries for mercy, until the vital spark had been very nearly drenched out of his body, and unless the whipper-in had taken him from them, he must assuredly have been killed in the curing. Sailors and seafaring men are proverbially superstitious,

and his dippers insisted that, to effect a cure, he must be all but drowned—if not quite—before the desired change in his blood would take place.

Poor fellow! he came home more than satisfied with his dose of salt water, which left him in a prostrate condition for some days. His mind, however, was set at rest; he dreaded no longer an attack of hydrophobia, and went about his work as usual. For four years after, while in our service, he enjoyed his general good health, although at the return of spring we gave him alterative medicines, succeeded by a dose or two of calomel, and at the expiration of the period he was married, and left our service for his native village, where he worked as a farm-labourer for four years longer. Not liking his occupation, he returned again to his old place, but greatly altered in appearance, from severe labour and hard living, to which he had been unaccustomed, having, previous to becoming feeder, filled the situation of footman in our family. Although ever a most willing active servant, he was not of a robust constitution, and not of very strong intellect. We noticed the change, and did all in our power to induce him to feel once more at home, for it had ever been our desire to attach those capable of attachment by every kindness to ourselves, and we had rarely failed in this respect.

He was soon evidently in a rapid consumption, and died just nine years after being bitten by the hound; and those who attended him in his last moments declared that he was attacked with convulsions and barked like a dog! If the fact were

so, which we had no reason to disbelieve, it is a proof that the virus does remain in the system for a great length of time without showing itself; and there is another singular fact connected with hydrophobia, which came immediately under our own observation—its breaking out in three days, six days, or nine days—and at the same period of weeks —the last hound we lost having been seized just nine weeks after its first appearance in the kennel.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Various prescriptions for the cure of hydrophobia—Oliver Gold-smith's opinion—Dogs having fits and distemper often condemned as mad—Our terrier on the moor.

In the last chapter on this subject we gave the results of our experience and observation when the poison had once entered into the system, and we believe when that has been the case, there is no cure that has ever been discovered. We had no means of ascertaining when and where the hounds had been bitten which died from hydrophobia, but as they must have been bitten some days before they exhibited symptoms of the malady, we felt powerless to avert the consequences. We could only palliate the paroxysms. But in regard to our feeder, whose arm was perforated through and through, the opportunity presented itself of taking active measures immediately, which prevented its breaking out, and then, after nine years, in a very mitigated form. Our opinion is, that if remedies were applied instantly, as soon as the bite is inflicted, by means of hot-water fomentations first, and cauterizing the part afterwards, that the power of the venom would be subdued to a very great extent, if not entirely blotted out; and that, at any rate, is something gained. To the bite of a viper we have used sweet

oil, with unvarying success, if immediately applied, or before the limbs or body begin to swell immoderately. We always used this remedy in the cub-hunting season, when the hounds were frequently bitten by these ancient enemies to the human race. For the sting of wasp or bee—of which insects we entertain a well-founded dread, from having been nearly killed by them—oil or ammonia, if applied immediately, will effect a speedy cure.

We are told by sporting writers that hydrophobia prevailed to an alarming extent in this country sixty years ago—in the years 1806 and 1807, when the weather was very changeable; and *worming* was then greatly in vogue, as a supposed precaution against a mad dog biting. This idea of a worm existing under the tongue of a dog, causing not only a voracious appetite, but creating uneasy, irritable sensations, is one of the most absurd theories which has ever entered into the head of man to conceive. There is a fibrous or skinny substance under a dog's tongue—simply a membrane connected with it—which medical men of the old school pronounced to be a living worm, and the excision of which was supposed to be sufficient to counteract the evil consequences of *rabies canina*, by preventing the dog biting another. Prevention in such cases would be far better than cure; but it appears that the wormed dogs went mad quite as readily as those that were not wormed, and were not incapacitated, by the excision of this ideal worm, from implanting the virus raging in their own system to the bodies of any other animals,

biped or quadruped, with which they unfortunately came in contact. Worming, of course, failed, which any man of common acquaintance with canine nature might have anticipated. To Pliny has been attributed this fanciful crotchet, and upon his authority it has been handed down as an infallible remedy in the prevention, if not cure, of hydrophobia. Blane says: "In the operation of worming, it is common to strip off this frœnum or bridle from the tongue, the violence made use of in doing which, puts it on the stretch, so that when removed from the mouth, its recoil is adduced as a proof that it is alive, and proves it a worm in the opinion of credulity."

That queer old writer, Markham, seems to have fallen into the same error, and, in treating of this worming system, observes:—"When young, a little worm is subject to breed under their tongues, that makes them bark much; take it out with an awl, and it prevents their growing mad." He then continues,—"It is said there are seven sorts of madness in dogs" (why not seventeen, or seventy?): "the dumb madness, the running, the falling, the lank, the lean madness, the sleeping, the shivering, and the hot burning madness; and in my opinion the best and only cure is to knock them on the head for it."

Notwithstanding his rational opinion, so far as the last sentence, our old sporting friend, Gervase Markham, prescribes various remedies for the cure of hydrophobia, such as "sow-thistle, fat meat, filberts, dry figs, woman's milk, calomel, wild tare

seed, ass's milk, garlic and rue." After his first suggestion, as to "the only cure by knocking a mad dog on the head," we are surprised at his recommending such ridiculous nostrums as those above cited, for the cure of that malady which he had pronounced previously to be incurable; and as for the seven sorts of madness, these are simply the seven phases, or stages, of the disease. Of Markham —who could give a very fair account of hounds and hunting, evidently in this respect a practical man, although not a foxhunter of the present school—we might have expected better things than this loosely-strung list of remedies for *rabies canina*. The only excuse to be made for him is, that it must have been *inter pocula* when such crazy notions entered into his head, and we have an idea that "ass's milk" did not form a component part of his breakfast, although it is more than probable that filberts and figs were largely indulged in after dinner, and not disagreeing with his happy digestion, he recommends them to his mad patients.

To show the medical talent in olden time, we give the opinion of Leonard Mascal, who flourished in the reign of James I., and had the honour of attending that learned monarch :—

"In hounds and dogs which fall mad, the cause is that black choler hath the mastery in his body, which choler once roused in them through vehement heat, it overcometh the body, and maketh him to run mad. For the black choler, which is so strong, infecteth his brain, and so from thence goeth to all the other members, and maketh him venemous."

His list of curatives follows, showing the excursive imagination of this most learned of doctors :—

"Also calamint, seed of wild tares, sea-onions, watercresses, herbgrace, salt, aristolochia, nuts with rue, the roots of asperage, and the seed, balsanum, vinegar, and the milk of an ass, and other *unmentionables*"—no doubt equally efficacious, and making more of the ingredients thrown into their cauldron by the witches in *Macbeth*, the enumeration of which would not prove palatable to tastes polite. In later times we have heard of the Ormskirk medicine—supposed to be infallible—Dr. Mead's remedy, and the remedies of other learned Thebans, which have proved equally fallacious. Cauterizing the part bitten has also been recommended, and this, in our opinion, if *immediately adopted*, is the only remedy likely to be of the slightest service, since we believe when once the virus has had sufficient time to enter the system, no medicine with which we are at present acquainted has power to check its progress.

Oliver Goldsmith makes some very sensible remarks on the subject, to which we fully subscribe, and transcribe for the benefit of the timid :—

"A dread of mad dogs is the epidemic terror which now prevails, and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his mallet, and a few of unusual bravery arm them-

selves with boots and gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem by their present spirit to show a resolution of being tamely bit by mad dogs no longer. Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or not somewhat resembles the ancient Gothic custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot and thrown into the water. If she swam, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch; if she sunk, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. In the same manner a crowd gather round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side. If he attempts to stand on the defensive and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, 'for a mad dog always snaps at everything.' If, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, for 'mad dogs always run straight forward before them.' Were most stories of this nature well examined, it would be found that of numbers of such as have been actually bitten, not one in a hundred was bit by a mad dog."

As a case in point, confirming Goldsmith's opinion, we remember the highly-respected master of our school being bitten on the fleshy part of his arm by a young greyhound, which, from being seized with a fit immediately after, and foaming at the mouth, our kind-hearted doctor believed to be mad, and with a resolution few would exhibit, he ran into the kitchen, thrust a knife into the fire until it was red-hot, and

then cut out the bitten part with his own hand. A fearful wound was the consequence; but fortunately the dog was not destroyed, as ordered, and a surgeon being sent for pronounced it to be a bad case of distemper only. Had the dog been killed, our worthy master would have been distracted with apprehension for weeks and months.

The life of a suspected dog, which has bitten man, woman, or child, or other dogs and animals, ought to be preserved, and his manner carefully watched, to prove whether he is really mad or not; and we are the more convinced of the soundness of this advice from a case which came under our own observation some twenty years ago. We bought a terrier, which was warranted as having passed through the ordeal of distemper, and when walking out with him one day in the month of May, with an attendant carrying our rod and fishing-basket, he was seized with a fit, and bit our servant through the arm in his attempts to pacify him. The man immediately let go the dog, which went away at a tremendous pace over the open moor, until lost to sight.

"That dog is mad, sir," exclaimed our companion, "and I shall be mad too within a few hours, or days at furthest."

"That dog is not mad," was our reply; "and to satisfy you on that point we must recover him."

"I never wish to see him again, sir: let him go!"

"And let you fancy yourself going mad, which you will do to a certainty, unless I prove to you the contrary?"

The dog had gone straight across the moor for about two miles, and we searched the ravines lying under it for some hours without finding him.

"Better go home, sir," remarked our companion; "we shall never see him again alive."

"The moon will rise early to-night," was our reply; "you can go home."

"No sir, not without you; and I think, if he must be found, that I can show you where he is likely to be."

"Lead on, then;" and on walking down another ravine, covered with heather and gorse, calling his name, the dog's head suddenly appeared out of a patch of brushwood, close to the stream. Our delight may be imagined, on beholding him come forth to meet us. After frisking about and showing his joy at being restored to his master, the dog quietly followed us home, greatly to the surprise of our attendant; and, to make assurance doubly sure, we fed him that night with our own hand, and put the key of the stable in which he had been kept in our own pocket. The next morning, however, on being let loose, he exhibited such symptoms of unusual excitement, notwithstanding a calomel pill administered after his supper, that my attendant of the previous day, in conjunction with the landlady of the inn at which I was then sojourning, requested that the dog might be immediately shot, to prevent further mischief, as he was evidently mad; and soon after some of the village authorities called upon me for the same purpose.

"Nothing you can say or urge," was our reply,

"shall alter our determination. We have seen numerous cases of hydrophobia; this is not of that character: and to satisfy you how firm my opinion is, that terrier shall never again be out of my sight, or out of my bedroom at night, until he is thoroughly recovered from this attack of distemper."

We need scarcely add, that all thought us better fitted for a lunatic asylum than to be at large, petting a mad dog. But knowing well what we were about, we persevered in our course of treatment, notwithstanding an occasional fit; and at the end of a fortnight the dog was recovered so far that all his bloodthirsty enemies applauded our firmness in not allowing him to be destroyed, and the bitten man rejoiced in his escape from a fearful death, or at least the constant apprehension of it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The science of foxhunting opposed to harehunting—Chase of the wild stag—Exmoor Forest—Famous runs—Major Byng Hall's work.

THERE is a science in all our sports and recreations—in other words, the practical knowledge of being able to do things rightly and at the right time—which distinguishes the accomplished proficient from the novice or mere professor. There is a science in foxhunting, a science in harehunting, a science in coursing; science in deer-stalking, science in racing, science in riding to hounds, science in shooting and angling; science in boating, cricketing, and other manly recreations; a science in archery and croquêt, more particularly appertaining to the fair sex. There are various other games and sports, albeit requiring skill and forethought, we do not place in our category, having at this moment our thoughts more engrossed with field sports. Foxhunting has not very inappropriately been designated by the rather presumptuous title of "The Noble Science;" and how far it is deserving this distinction it will be our endeavour to shadow forth.

Leaving for further consideration presently the many benefits conferred upon the country generally

by foxhunting, and its tendency to promote good-fellowship and more social intercourse between the higher and lower classes, we will confine our remarks to the sport itself, and the cause which may be disposed to claim for it this distinction from all other field sports. The most devoted harehunter must admit that, although his game may exhibit great cunning and ingenuity in her various stratagems to avoid her pursuers, and occasionally imitate the fox by taking a forward course for some miles, yet, as a general rule, her running is confined to the circular rather than the straight line. When first routed from her form, with the currant jelly dogs in full cry, and hard upon her scent, she goes away at full speed, quickly distancing her enemies; but at the first check the natural instinct of the animal is brought into play. Unfitted for prolonged exertions, she betakes herself to those devious movements which have sometimes gained for her the sobriquet of a witch; and on this point Beckford very pertinently remarks, "We have heard of hares as witches, but never of foxes as wizards;" in fact, no two animals of venery can be more dissimilar in their tactics.

The hare is fitted for rapid flight, more rapid than the fox for a certain time, but she possesses not the power of endurance characteristic of the more robustly formed fox. The power of the hare being quickly exhausted, she has recourse to those tricks and devices which now seem to come instinctively to her aid. Without any shelter to seek, or home underground in which to hide her diminished head—

for when a hare is running, every old harehunter knows that her hind quarters are raised higher than the fore—she must beat her pursuers by foils and doubles, in the hope of regaining strength or eluding the vigilance of her enemies. She will run straight up one furrow to the hedge, go through it for five yards, and then retrace her steps, and when half way down it again take two or three wonderful springs at right angles, and then lie unseen in the fallow, whilst the clamorous crew of motley or mottled hounds are pressing to the fore.

"Patience on a monument" would not be an inappropriate representation of a huntsman to harriers on his horse, without any excitement working his brain, whilst his hounds are doing their best to work out the scent. Everything is quiet and peaceable around. He has no call upon the energetic action of mind or matter. He may take out his pipe, light and smoke it—and it may be about the most sensible thing he can do—whilst Bellman and Bowler are proclaiming their sagacity by unravelling the labyrinthian windings of their game. We are not thinking now of riding down a hare with a lot of thoroughbred foxhounds; this is not legitimate harehunting, more than hallooing, screaming, and telegraphing a fox, are foxhunting. Orthodox harehunting consists in allowing hounds to work out the line without lifting them, except on very particular occasions; and it must be a very consolatory reflection in believing that, so far from haste or excitement aiding you in your object, patience and perseverance are the most certain

means to lead to success; and herein lies one great and wide difference between foxhunting and harehunting.

To tell a huntsman to the former that his fox had been seen half-an-hour in advance is tantamount to an almost certain annihilation of his hitherto sanguine hopes of getting again on tolerably good terms with him; but the harehunter receives no discouragement from news so unwelcome to his brother in scarlet, knowing that when beyond the sound of Bow Bells his game is not still showing him a light pair of heels, but cooling her heavy heels in some sedgy swamp, or beneath the shade of a huge turnip. "The more haste the less speed" is the characteristic motto of harehunting; *Vestigia nulla retrorsum* that of foxhunting.

The pursuit of the timid is a very agreeable pastime to men of a certain age or certain fixed habits; and we quite agree with Beckford that "when you make a serious business of it, you spoil it." There is not, and ought not to be, anything serious about it; there is no serious work to be undertaken. A pleasant sociable little group of friends and neighbours meet the master in green at the appointed fixture. They enjoy their little chat; have time to discuss the current news of the parish; exchange perhaps their opinions on the change of administration—always ticklish ground in the country; and then—exchange lights for cigars.

"Now, gentlemen," exclaims the master, disliking tobacco scent, "I think we had better move on.

Where shall we find a hare, Mr. Stubbs?" appealing to an old farmer of the old type.

"Sure to be one or two in our swedes, sir, or t'other side of the hedge, in that piece of fallow."

"Where first, farmer?"

"Fallows, if you please, sir, being the most likely ground," with a knowing wink of his eye.

"Ah, yes! I understand. Lead the way and open the gate for us."

The field show their wish to assist the master by crossing the fallows at certain distances from each other, although probably not half a dozen out of the five-and-twenty horsemen would discover a hare in her form upon ploughed land. No matter—all take their turn about; and at the third turn up rises the timid at the extreme end of the line of march, and furthest from the huntsman. A hulla-baloo ensues, every man shouting or squeaking according to the powers of his vocal organ. Away scamper the pack, heads up and tails down, in view of their game; dash into a hedgerow, the boundary of the parish road, and over it into the opposite field, where they appear in the middle of it, with heads up and tails up too, looking about them as if they expected another view.

"Hang it," exclaims the huntsman, "this comes of all that confounded hallooing."

"Why don't you make your cast, then?" cries Tom Headstrong, upon a pulling steeplechaser.

"Casts be d——," retorts the excited master, "no hounds will throw up at head when there's a scent before them; they have been pressed beyond it."

So it proved. An old lady in a scarlet cloak, toddling up the pathway leading across the field, had frightened poor pussy so much, that she turned short, and made again for the road, down which she ran some half mile, and then made good her point for a little brake not a mile distant. The currant jelly dogs had now to bring their noses to the grindstone, and to pick out the line by slow degrees down the road, scent being ticklish, until they hit the meuse through which their game had passed some fifteen minutes before them. Then arose a Babel of tongues on crossing an Eden of pasture land, and everybody said, who knew nothing of the matter, "Now we are in for a run." They were out of their reckoning.

Ten minutes or a quarter of an hour—we prefer the former—allows a fox time for consideration; and he makes up his mind accordingly to steer for a certain covert or head of earths some eight, ten, or fifteen miles, short of which he never thinks of loitering by the way, except to recruit his strength by slackening speed. The timid squats as soon as she reaches the first coppice, or perhaps, if an old one, traverses it to elude her pursuers, round and round; and then emerging from its shelter, throws herself into a hedgerow, patch of gorse or brushwood beyond, where she sits patiently, expecting to have outwitted them. Guider, however, unravels the mystery by perseveringly following her tortuous footsteps, and springing on to the bank, bustles her out into the field below; and away go the merry pack in full chorus back again to the fallows on which

she was first found—through the swedes and over the open for a short distance, and then circling round to the little coppice, another ring is described *interiore gyro*, as her strength fails, and she is pulled down within a field of her starting-point. This is the usual style of running with hares in an enclosed country. Those bred on open downs generally go ahead, and afford chases more resembling those of the fox; but although possessing superior speed to the wily animal, they lack his power of endurance.

Wild deer hunting stands nearly if not quite on an equal footing with foxhunting—a noble sport, the sport of royalty from time immemorial in these realms. But where is it to be enjoyed now? On one spot only of once merry England, that wild tract of land and wood called Exmoor Forest, where, by the generosity of its liberal owner, Mr. Knight, wild deer have been strictly preserved for many years, not for stalking, but for hunting; and thereby affording sport of a superior nature to the gentlemen of Somerset and Devon who have the good fortune to reside in the vicinity of this favoured spot. From the reign of Elizabeth down to the year 1760, staghunting was supported here at the expense of the Crown, Hugh Pollard, Esq., ranger of the forest in her time, having first established a pack of staghounds at Limmouth Water. To show the length of time a wild stag will run before hounds, and the extent of country he will traverse, we give a description of a run from Major Hall's sporting work, entitled "Exmoor, or the

Footsteps of St. Hubert in the West," which we obtained from the journal of the hunt :—

"Oct. 3rd. 1781.—Found a stag in Millen's Wood, in the parish of Goodleigh. Stopped the tufters, and laid on the pack, in the road above Chilfum Bridge. From this point he made for Birchwood, and thence on to Bratton Down; then over Exmoor by Wallaford, Castlehead, Battlewater, Blackpits, to Lucat Moor; thence by Pool Bridge, for Homer, and down to Eastwater Pool, where the hounds run into him, and he was killed after a glorious chase of two hours and a half.

"A respectable farmer, named Ellis, informed the field, previous to the stag being taken, that he had been in his meadows the previous night, inasmuch as he had driven him from a field with his sheep dog, and that he knew him well, from a white spot on his haunch, and therefore could not be mistaken. This intelligence proved to be correct, as on the death of the stag, true enough, the white spot on the haunch was discovered. We have named this fact to show the immense distance of ground these animals will travel over when disturbed, as, from the spot named by Mr. Ellis to that of Millen's Wood, where he was found, could not have been less than thirty miles."

To those who take an interest in the wild scenery and wild sports of the West, we can recommend this book of Major Hall's, published in 1840, as likely to afford them both pleasure and entertainment in the perusal of its pages.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook ;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky ;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment sniff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh."—SCOTT.

Something more about staghunting and deer—Scientific huntsmen to foxhounds—An example in Will Headman.

ADMITTED that a wild red deer can hold its course equal in extent to that of a thorough good fox, of which from our own experience we entertain no doubt, still the chase of the stag and fox differ very materially in some respects from the find throughout to the finish. In the first place, our ears are not gladdened by the merry cry of hounds, increasing from one or two notes until the swelling chorus echoes through the wood and dale, filling every true sportsman's heart with rapture and delight. There is nothing of this enlivening nature in staghunting. A few old hounds called tufters are thrown into the wood, where a staggart stag, or warrantable stag—his age ascending from four to six years old—has been harboured by the woodman or forester; and these tufters are used

for the purpose of rousing up the stag from amongst the ladies of his harem, and forcing him apart from them, to show himself outside the wood hedge. When this object has been obtained by the tufters, and the deer breaks clear away, the pack is then let loose from some near barn or shed, and laid on the scent. Thus the first overture to staghunting is decidedly tame, in comparison to finding our fox. Then so sweet and lasting is the scent of the deer that there is no necessity to clap hounds upon him the moment he breaks covert, and little anxiety is experienced as to the result of his capture. Staghounds, with a fair start, are almost sure to keep on good terms with their game afterwards, seldom requiring to be lifted or cast, the only critical interruption to the chase being when the deer beats down a stream, which he always will do when blown if water is near, and continue swimming through the pool, and floundering through the shallows in the middle of the river, for a mile or more at a stretch, to shake off his pursuers. If he takes to water up wind, and the stream is not very wide, the pack run the scent on the banks, to which the floating particles are wafted, where

"Fuming vapours rise and hang upon the gently purling brook."

Who has not seen terriers and spaniels following the track of rat or waterfowl across pools of water or rivers wide and deep? We have often seen our own hounds running as hard, or softly — perhaps the latter term would be more appropriate— yet swiftly over water meadows, with the spray flying above and over their bodies like a cloud of

dust; so it is very clear that water does not prove a non-conductor of scent. We find water possesses the power of attracting and retaining the effluvia of odours which, save for its magnetic influence, would be dispersed in other directions down the wind and down the stream. The case may be somewhat altered in staghunting; yet, wherever the deer emerges from the stream, and shakes himself from the water, there the hounds can have no difficulty in taking up the running.

Beckford says:—"Could a foxhound distinguish his hunted fox as the deerhound does the deer that is blown, foxhunting would then be perfect." This assertion has been cavilled at by other sporting writers better up, to use a scholastic term, in theory than practice. One ounce of experience is worth two pounds of theory; and we have witnessed scores of times—hundreds we might safely say—our own deerhounds pursuing a blown deer through and through an entire herd, without deviating right or left, or flushing away upon another scent, until they disengaged him from his comrades, more anxious to evade than befriend him.

Having both red and fallow deer in our park—not an over extensive one—some of the latter would occasionally break bounds, and betake themselves to the adjoining woods, from which we had to dislodge them, not by harriers, or foxhounds turned into staghounds *pro hac vice*, but by two or three squeaking fast resolute terriers, trained to the purpose, which would not stop short at any other inferior game, such as hares or rabbits. The deer-

hounds bred by ourselves would run either by nose or view; but the terriers were so wonderfully rapid in their movements, and possessed of such extraordinarily good scenting qualifications, that in a few moments after been thrown into the largest covert they struck upon the track of a deer, and rousing him up with tooth and nail from his lair, he was obliged immediately to fly or die, since from their large size—too large to run with the foxhounds, but of the same blood—they would spring at a deer's throat, and thereby hang on until the deerhounds came to assist them. We had, however, a somewhat singular method of capturing our deer without much injury. The dogs were trained to run at the ears and no other part; so that when a couple of these hounds, lusty and powerful, ran up alongside of their blown deer, one on either side, he was soon pulled down, and held by the ears until we reached the spot.

Handling even a fallow buck with full honours upon his head is far more ticklish work than handling a live fox; but grappling with a stag of the red deer species involves a terrific encounter, little short of bearding a lion in his den. Everybody has heard of "taking a bull by the horns," yet we have never seen the man who would do it when the animal was infuriated. We have had numerous encounters with common deer, and many rollings and tumblings in consequence, being often kicked over upon our backs, although from physical power able to overcome them at last; but with the red deer in the plenitude of his strength we have found

it hopeless to contend head to head, or hand to hand, *totidem verbis*, we could not hold him, even when the bracelet had been tightened above his hocks to prevent his escape. Fight and rake with his antlers he would, giving more than a welcome to all comers on, until a lasso was thrown over his head, or a bullet sent through it.

Our last encounter with a stag of this kind we have good cause to remember. He was brought to bay, after a long chase, in a small brook, by a couple of deerhounds fierce and resolute as tigers, and one of them, our greatest favourite, in endeavouring to pull him down, was struck through and through her body by his spike. Infuriated by this fatal attack upon the truest and best deerhound we ever possessed, we rushed furiously upon her destroyer, and seized him by the horns. He hurled us as he would a child from him upon the bank. We knew his strength then, and springing up, resolved to meet it. Once more with renewed vigour and exasperation we returned to the charge, and grappling with him in right earnest, sent the knife through his throat, which quickly settled the combat.

Red deer generally—the stags I mean—are fierce and savage, particularly in the rutting season; the only exception to this rule in our experience being an aged one presented to us with other red calves by the grandfather of the present Duke of Beaufort, when we were also in our calfhood or boyhood, and by whom, being then Lord-Lieutenant of the county, we had also the honour of being appointed a magistrate at a very early date. This deer, which

had been named "Mumbo Jumbo," from the terror inspired by his majestic size and appearance to all women and children, happened to be the most gentle of his kind. He would come down to the hall-door, and receive bits of bread and other things from the hands of our children, following them also about the park in the most dutiful manner. A friend of ours acquainted somewhat with the nature of red deer, remarked to us one day, "If you don't kill that stag, he will some day kill one of your children."

"We know him too well," was our reply, "or a bullet would have gone through his head long ago."

Poor old "Mumbo Jumbo" merited our confidence in him to the last. When, chilled by the blasts of a very inclement winter in a heavy fall of snow, he was found unable to rise from the ground, we had him conveyed upon a hurdle covered with straw into a loose box, where he was attended with assiduous care until his candle was burnt out; and his grateful acceptance of all our little attentions to his wants proved that he appreciated our kindness. Those who have studied deeply the characteristics of animal nature must have perceived something more than instinct cropping out in their conduct towards those who show them great kindness. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," and so will every animal or bird in the creation respond in some way to gentle and kind treatment.

Irrespective of the high scent exuding from a red deer in chase, there is the slot or mark of his hoof left strongly impressed upon soft soil, by which the huntsman may be guided when his hounds are at

fault. In Mr. Scrope's work on Deerstalking (who, by the way, was an old friend of my father's) we find him so impressed with the idea of deer invariably running up wind, that he was slow to believe the contrary, which will appear from a quotation we give in his own words:—"It is mentioned in a letter printed by the late Lord Graves, who hunted the wild deer in Devonshire, that these animals, when they find themselves pursued by scent, generally run down wind, and the same thing has been asserted by others. This, if true (for I confess I have my doubts), is an extraordinary instance of sagacity, as their natural instinct leads them to the opposite direction; it being a most difficult thing for men alone to drive them down wind."

Mr. Scrope clearly doubts the fact of red deer running down wind as their general practice. Foxes, however, almost invariably turn down wind, unless trying to reach some sanctum or place of refuge, and in this respect show the wiliness of their nature, by keeping their enemies at a longer distance, and in the full knowledge that they cannot come upon them without due notice.

There is another reason why foxhunting may take precedence of stag—we do not mean *calf*, but wild deer—hunting. The fox, in comparison with the stag, is a very diminutive creature, leaving generally a very poor scent behind him, except under very pressing circumstances; and as his physical power is diminished by a long chase, so are the chances of overhauling him lessened by the consequent failure of the *sine quà non*. With a burning scent the

science of foxhunting is not called forth. There is nothing to do or think about but riding; and there are many, very many huntsmen to foxhounds good up to the throat—good horsemen, good riders to hounds, and with good voices—yet without heads. Racing a fox to death is not foxhunting. Perhaps we had better attempt to elucidate our meaning by bringing before our readers a slight sketch of a hunting run, to show the working of a scientific huntsman's brains upon such an occasion. The day or month of the year is not of very great consequence, nor the whereabouts. It may suffice to say, that not even an old oak-leaf swung suspended upon its branches when Will Headman, with as fine a lot of hounds as ever stepped over the flags of a kennel, was seen approaching a beautiful fox covert, containing about thirty acres of good fox lying. An individual of rather aristocratic features rides down to meet him.

"A fine morning, Headman, and I hope a fine scent."

"Don't often go together, my Lord."

"Well—perhaps not; but we shall be sure to find a fox here, I suppose, and then you and your hounds must make the best of him."

"We must find him first, my Lord, and I'm not very sanguine about that in these parts. There are too many keepers to make sure of finding foxes."

"You think they kill them, then, Headman? although to my certain knowledge they have orders to preserve them."

"I know all about it, my Lord, or I have no

business to be where I am—huntsman. They kill all they can catch, and no more; poison 'em they are afraid of doing. But, my Lord, if you like to ride with us ten yards within the wood hedge, I'll tell you if there is a fox here or no. The gentlemen, I see, are all crowding to the top of the wood as usual, where you can see everything, and a fox, of course, when he breaks, quicker than I can."

At the gate opening into the lower drive through the thickest part of the coppice, stands a keeper, who, on Lord P——'s approach, doffs his hat very obsequiously.

"I hope we shall find a fox here to-day," said his Lordship, "or I shall report you to the Duke for a fox-killer."

"Sure to find, my Lord; I heard him barking last night, when I were unroosting the pheasants."

"Hang the pheasants! We don't care about that dull pastime; keep us foxes, sir, or you shall not be kept much longer."

"A fox, my Lord, by all that's wonderful!" exclaimed Will Headman, as his hounds dashed eagerly into the stuff; "but he's a stranger; so look out, my Lord, for he won't hang a minute."

Will Headman was not often short in his reckoning. A few quick sharp tongues are first heard, then such a crash through the wood; one turn, and he breaks away at the top of the covert. He is headed by the puff of a cigar from young Coventry, who had pertinaciously taken up a position close to Jem, the first whip, although respectfully solicited not to do so.

"Hang that conceited ass!" cries an old sportsman. "I told him he had no business at that point, unless he wished to spoil our run, and he has done it."

The body of the pack came with an impetus out of covert, and in their eagerness flash beyond where the fox had been headed.

"Hark! back! hark!" vociferated Jem, with a crack of his ponderous thong, turning them in a moment. "Old Saracen has it! hoic, to him, hoic!" and the pack is lost to sight, running sharply back inside the wood hedge, down to the drive, where still sat Will Headman in his saddle, patiently awaiting the expected result.

"Hah! here he comes;" when he heard the rustling of the fallen leaves; and in a second the fox sprang across the drive, with a bound like that of a greyhound. Yet no scream issued from Headman's lips. The hounds were well upon the line, at a pace which could not be improved.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"All at once the pack
With greedy nostrils sniff'd the fuming steam
That glads their flutt'ring hearts ; as winds let loose
From the dark caverns of the blust'ring god
They burst away, and sweep the dewy lawn."

Will Headman handling his hounds—Jem the first whip—A wily trickster outwitted—"Finis coronat opus."

Will Headman knew when to let well alone. His lips, however, moved a little as he muttered, "Ah! you're a fine one, and I shall know you again; and now I know also the point where your home lies; that's enough for me. But, by Jove, he's away!" as his quick eye caught a glimpse of his friend springing into the field from the high wood bank. "Ah! that's the thing! no hallooing now; the gents are all t'other side—the right side of the wood for us. We shall have a fair start, and after that no favour."

No sooner had the fox cleared the second fence over a large pasture field, than the forms of Will Headman and his hunter were seen vaulting over the deep ditch which bounded the coppice, and then —not till then, when his darlings were settled well down upon the scent—did a screech issue from his throat, which cleared the wood of any young hound which might have lingered behind.

"Cheeringly ho! merrily, cheeringly on we go,"

cried the enraptured huntsman; "he's a tough one, my lads, and a traveller; but, please the pigs, we'll handle him before the moon's up."

For three miles Will Headman had it all to himself, the pace being such that no rider, however good, without a good start, could get near them.

"Ha! we are a trifle too hard upon him," he muttered. "He can't hold his ground up wind to Beacon Hill earths at this pace. He knows it, and so do I. Therefore he'll try to shake us off in Batcombe"—a covert of more than a hundred acres which the hounds had just reached—"push up a fresh one, too, perhaps, if he can; but—well—I wish Jem were with us. He has taken his measure as well as I have, no doubt, and will know him again."

The pack went streaming up the middle of the drive, their huntsman close in their wake, when they turned about midway into the high wood, bearing to the left, with every tongue let loose as if they were in view of their fox.

"Capital!" exclaims Will Headman in raptures; "nothing can be better!" and he pressed forward with energy up a blind trackway to be with them. A welcome scream greets his ear as he tears through briars and blackthorns.

"Jem's view, halloo! by all that's lucky; but how got he there?"

In a few seconds the hounds are outside the wood hedge, and not a hundred yards behind appears the head of their huntsman, scrambling through the hazel sticks of ten years' growth, his face besmeared with blood.

"Far afore 'em, Jem?" was his laconic question.

"Not above two minutes, master."

"Will you know him now?"

"Right well."

"Then mind we don't change for a worse—this is a good un."

A trifling check on the ploughed ground.

"That's the point at which you hallooed, Jem?"

"Yes; and he turned to the left as for Buttermere"—another big wood.

"Aye, aye," muttered Headman, "I see his tactics. He won't try for his point until he has thrown us far deeper into the shade. Away to the far corner of the wood, Jem, as fast as you can go. We can rattle him through it without your help—and as for Jack, we don't want him."

The traveller having tried the earths, with which he seemed to be well acquainted, by reason probably of his intimacy with some black-eyed Susan who dwelt therein, and finding the door shut, took a circuit round the covert, hoping thereby to keep his pursuers at a more convenient distance, in making his *grand coup* for Beacon Hill. Will stuck to him like birdlime, through thick and thin—high wood and low—cheering and pressing on his hounds now in right good earnest, until the traveller was obliged to make his escape, although still from pressure unable to venture on the experiment of running up wind for eight miles over the open, with nothing but a hedgerow to shelter him. This crafty old fox and Will Headman were engaged in playing out a game of chess on grass land instead of

board, and it seemed doubtful sometimes which would be the winner—biped or quadruped. Charles James feared to commit himself with an opponent quite as wide awake as himself, who would have taken advantage of him the moment he caught him making an imprudent move; and Will Headman had resolved that when he did make that move, and faced the open for Beacon Hill earths, his brush should be in his hand before he could reach them; therefore Charles James thought to compass his ends by a deviation from the straight line, which a younger vulpine in his ignorance would have attempted, and been eaten up before he had gone half way.

He had felt the pace at which he had been hurried along in the first burst by Will Headman's lurching hounds, superior in speed and quickness to the pack in his own country, which for three seasons had been outrun by him and their huntsman outwitted, and wisely endeavoured, by seeking the shelter of the big wood, to put a greater distance between his brush and the noses of these rattlers. A wild scream from Jem proclaimed his flight a second time only two fields ahead of the pack; and another burst over all grass land brought him in view just as he gained the wood hedge of the last large covert, over which the hounds bounded all abreast into the high covert, and through it they pressed him out into the drive, which he held to for three hundred yards or so; then turned short into the younger coppice. For a second the tongues are silent, the leading hounds in their eagerness having overrun

the scent. Quickly, however, they turn to the right and left; but old Bounty hits it off almost at right angles from the drive up which the fox had been running.

With a cheer from Will Headman they are at him again, yet not all together. The foremost couples, in scoring back to the cry of the veterans, crossed the line of a fresh fox, and away they went with him in an opposite direction, throwing their tongues right merrily. An anxious expression might have been seen to dwell for a few moments on the features of Headman.

"Changed at last," he muttered; "but no great misfortune. It might have been worse. I have still a handful of the right sort upon the right line, any two couples of which will stick to him, and taste him too, if above ground. Now, Jem, we shall see if you have taken his right measure."

Toot, toot, toot! went the horn. "Have at him again my darlings;" cried Will Headman with the veterans, cheering them on to victory, and crashing through the underwood as if he had been riding over a stubble field. At the furthest corner of the covert sat Jem, motionless as a statue, under a large whitethorn bush, patiently abiding his time. A fresh fox sprang out from the wood hedge, about a hundred yards below him.

"Ah! well," he said, "you arn't the animal I wants just now, although a very nice un to look at; but you'll do for another day;" and jumping the fence into the field below, he met Foreman, the leader of the levanters, with such a thundering

crack upon his sconce as to astonish himself and followers.

"Hey! hey! you flashing devils! what are you arter now? Get away with you! Hark back! hark to cry! hark, halloa!" as he heard Will Headman's cheer; and he swept them off the line of the fresh fox with his stinging whip as a housemaid would cobwebs from a ceiling. "Here—here—here!" he cried, hearing his huntsman's horn now outside the covert, and capping them down under the wood hedge at a rattling pace.

"For'ard, my lads—for'ard, away;" and in less time than it takes us to describe it, Jem had joined Will Headman with the delinquents, and once more the pack was complete, still going at a tremendous pace over some fine meadows, holding a capital scent.

"All right again, Jim!" exclaimed the huntsman; "he did'nt take much by that move. But where is he going now?"

"A long way round, master, to get home, and 'tis a long lane that's no turning; he will turn when he has got the chance, but he 'aint half done yet, and to my mind, will take another hour before he is dished up."

"Where's the gents, Jem?"

"Just where I hope they'll be till we have him in hand—nowhere, throw'd out at first starting; they never could make up leeway at the pace, and that's something in our favour, no over-riding them to-day."

A slight check at a troublesome brook; the wily

showing his craft by stopping short on the bank, and then running down the same side some little distance before crossing. In plunge the leaders, and out the other side, but there is no scent beyond them. Old Saracen, however, turns short down upon his line along the bank, and the youngsters catching it up again where he really had crossed flash away like lightning. A large flock of Leicester sheep are huddled up together in a corner of the next field.

"Hang them!" said Headman, "they ought to be in the fold eating turnips, instead of grass in the field, at this time o' year. They have followed him, Jem, the fools, as they always do; and I believe he got in amongst 'em on purpose."

"Most likely, master."

"Turn 'em away then, Jem, whilst I make it good the other side of the fence. I hates sheep as poison in the wool, but a boiled leg of mutton with trimmings isn't a bad thing on the table, when one comes home hungry after hunting." "Steadily, ho! my lads," was Will Headman's note, as he held them forward over the stained ground, not quite lifting them off their noses. "Hold to the line, my old darlings, and teach the young ones how to work through difficulties. We can afford him now a few minutes' longitude, and for all that, I feel pretty sure of overhauling him at last. This side wind tacking has brought him further away from his point than he intended, and eight miles goes for something at the pace we have been travelling."

By a judicious cast the line is quickly recovered, and the pack again clustering together go away at

a spanking rate over some rough old pasture fields. For four miles no interruption occurs, Will Headman and Jem having nothing to do but to ride, until they reach Calcot Plantation, in the middle of which there is a large pool, with a grass drive all round it. The hounds dash eagerly into the water, crossing over to the opposite bank; they feather out amongst the rough brushwood, trying right and left of themselves, but no tongue is going. Will Headman now comes to their assistance, but his manœuvring fails to recover the scent.

"What's become of him, master?" exclaims Jem; "drowned himself to outwit us?"

"No, not that; I have it now. He has doubled back into the water from the same spot he landed, and swam down midway to the tail of the pool. Here here, my lads!" and he galloped to the point he expected the fox would make for. "Hah! we have him again." The old hounds take up the hunting—noses are down instead of heads up. They do not dash and fly as heretofore, neither is there a clamorous cry, yet they press steadily forward. A patch of stunted gorse lies in the fox's way, through which he brushes, lingering for a short while to recruit his failing strength, and thence boldly sets his head straight up wind for home. Once more their heads are up and sterns lowered, and away they go, running as if they viewed him.

"That move settles him," cried Will Headman in delight. "The Beacon Hills are looming in the far distance, but he can't reach them." For five miles more—the longest five yet accomplished—they still

press on at a galling pace, the power and condition of the foxhounds gaining rapid advantage over the less robust frame of the fox. Still on he toils with slackening speed, but not beaten yet.

"Yonder he goes, master," cried Jem, "over the brow of that second field to your left. Shall I get for'ard, and cut him off from the hill."

"Your horse could'nt do it if you were to try, Jem; but there's no occasion. He finds he cannot reach them, and now turns down wind again. Ten minutes more, and his race is run. The hounds shall kill him fairly by themselves, and how can they be doing better? Scoring and screaming at such a time won't mend matters, but make them worse."

When reaching the rising ground where Jem had viewed the fox, a few fields below them lay Oakwood, containing about fifty acres.

"Ah! that covert shelters him for a minute or two," exclaimed Headman. "Now, Jem, to the further corner, if your horse can do it; and mind we don't change, although I don't think it likely, as our neighbours were here yesterday, and of course the earths arn't unstopped yet."

Jem cuts corners to his position, taking advantage of every open gate; and to tell the truth his horse, Hardcastle, had, like the old fox they were pursuing, very litlle galloping power left in him.

"Well, old fellow," said Jem, jumping off the saddle when he reached the appointed place, "just you take a nibble at the grass while I mount this tree. I knows you won't run away, and if you do, I can run into that old varmint on my ten toes.

Charming! oh, charming music they makes!" chuckled Jem; "and coming my way too. He ain't far afore 'em, however, I'll swear; but as four legs is better than two, I'll just drop into the saddle again."

He had scarcely done so, when the fox, with measured gait and slow, emerged from the wood hedge, running alongside it for a hundred yards or so, then turned short back into it again. The hounds came out almost in view, the old ones with their bristles up now leading, and following his track with undeviating tenacity.

"Tally-ho! back," cried Jem. "Look out, master. Ah! they are a-physicking of him, and he has no more chance with them old uns at head than I should with a couple of lions. Hark! master has got a view on him. That screech of his is enough to frighten any fox to death. Yes, by jingo! they're out at the bottom of the wood, running like blazes up that hedgerow. Ah! what now? heads up and starns too? He's in the ditch—they are over it—old Bounty jumps in upon him. Out he comes, and exerts his last effort to regain the wood. But Barrister's on the right side—runs into him ere he has got half away across the field; and when the lawyer once gets hold of him 'tis whoo-hoop!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The New Year's gift of '61—"Keep moving," the cry of the day—Galloping down a fox not foxhunting—Spirit of hounds—Variety of foxes—Will Headman has a difficult game to play.

In our last chapter we attempted a delineation of a fox chase over a good country, and under favourable circumstances, the scent being sufficiently good to keep the majority of the field at a respectful distance; in fact, the pace throughout continued so fast, that the best riders—and there were some good ones out—were unable to get near the hounds. Had the run taken place over the open, the first flight men would have been there or thereabouts; but when a fox pursues his course through large coverts with blind drives, and those few and far between, *spick and span* foxhunters show a decided disinclination to have their pinks nearly torn off their backs by encounters with blackthorns and brambles, besides the disfigurement to the *os frontis* likely to result therefrom. It is imperative on a huntsman to foxhounds always to be with them; and he has more work to do with head and hand than the first whipper-in, whose position, comparatively speaking, is a very easy one. Jem might smoke his pipe, if he dare, on the outside of the big

wood whilst the master is tearing himself into tatters within it.

We have no wish to divest foxhunting of that spirit and energy which form its chief characteristics, in opposition to other hunting; but we have endeavoured to show by the conduct of Will Headman that there are occasions when it is well to "let well alone." So long as hounds continue to do their work well by themselves, any interference with them cannot fail to be prejudicial to sport. The eternal "toot—toot" of the horn, and perpetual cry of "Forward, forward!" when hounds are on good terms with their fox, is sure to produce mischief; what must they occasion then on bad scenting days? What is the use of hounds if huntsmen are resolved to do their work for them? The great secret of foxhunting is to know when to let hounds alone. Hallooing and screeching a fox too soon when first found is pretty sure to spoil your run, and the same thing repeated when he is sinking is generally productive of spoiling a good finish.

In the January number of "Baily," 1861, appeared a paper entitled "A New Year's Gift—One Word more on Foxhunting;" and although without any signature attached thereto, we have no hesitation in ascribing this excellent article to the author of "The Noble Science," whose opinions as a practical master also are deserving every consideration:—

"Let us not be mistaken. We deny not the needful energy, the brilliant cast, the firm and resolute effort to retrieve a check by what our

neighbours over the water term a *coup de main*, which cannot be Anglicised otherwise than as taking hold of hounds—nay, lifting them on occasion. We plead guilty to a love of mud-sucking, of beagling without pattering, convinced that it leads to an ultimate increase of pace—the pace that kills; that most haste is least speed; and that hounds of the present day, though bred faster, generally perform a run slower than formerly, because their own impetus, or that which barely follows or accompanies them, drives them beyond scent. But we seek not to effect revolution. The majority of the field are satisfied, without further inquiry into causes. 'There is no scent, and till something changes there can be no sport; and as to talking of too much haste—bosh!' On the very first day, when by chance the pell-mell, harum-scarum, go-ahead system succeeds, and a fox is galloped down, with perhaps two or three couples on scent, *finis coronat opus*, 'Bravo!' they cry; 'that's the time of day! Where should we have been with a huntsman a turn slower than greased lightning?' 'Ah! where?' we would answer 'where?' and where hounds would eventually get to, if they could not sometimes hunt. But the ruling motto is, 'Keep moving!' Aye, keep moving! and so long as we do keep moving, there may not possibly be a dozen of the field who know or care what hounds are about. We repeat that this paper is not penned with the slightest hope of attracting the attention or effecting any improvement in an uneducated class, who, with the best intentions, and gifted with true love of the

sport, cannot bring with them into the field the portion of intellect wherewithal they may have been endowed."

With one exception we fully endorse every sentence of this quotation from a brother master, and that exception is—"that hounds of the present day are bred faster." The *system* of the present era is faster — not the hound. The speed of thoroughbred foxhounds cannot be greater now than it was seventy years ago. We may provoke a contemptuous smile from the fast man by such an assertion; yet such is the fact—the irrefragable fact. We do not say indisputable, because men will dispute and split straws about anything; but if watches go faster now than they did seventy years ago, then may you claim greater speed for your hounds than that exhibited by Colonel Thornton's Merkin. "Then why or how comes it," demands the pace man, "that we can run into and eat up in fifteen or twenty minutes a fox that would have taken a pack of the past century a day to kill?"

Gently, my fast friends. Your foxes are slower by reason of over-feeding: and we suppose you will admit that an alderman, after a civic feast, would cut a poor figure in a foot-race of a mile the ensuing morning. Then there are two more points for your consideration. There is more than one distinct species of fox in this country at the present time which did not exist here seventy years ago — although only one species of foxhound. Before the introduction of French foxes some thirty or forty years since, there were only two in the British

Isles, two varieties of the vulpine genus, called the greyhound and bulldog. The first a large long animal, with light-coloured fur; the other possessing a wider head, and a much darker skin. These two original breeds have been nearly stamped out (except in certain wild mountainous districts), and a bad cross stamped in, by the importation of French foxes—a little red species, worth little save for their skins; and even in some parts of Wales, from which years ago we obtained some veritable greyhound foxes, there is nothing of the kind to be found.

These little red "varmints" have no chance with a pack of thoroughbred foxhounds when they can be prevailed upon to run straight, which is rarely the case. They cannot if they would, and would not if they could—it is not in their nature; but they often beat hounds by short running dodges. *N'importe* whether foxes be good or bad. The practice of trying to race them to death as soon as they are on foot is radically bad—destruction to sport and ruinous to hounds; and the men who advocate this rash system are either totally ignorant of "The Science of Foxhunting," or wholly indifferent to it. There is a restless impatience in pseudo-foxhunters of these latter days which thwarts the very object they have in view.

Beckford's observation is correct enough to a certain point—"Hounds which will not bear lifting are not worth keeping;" but it is equally certain that hounds which are continually lifted are worth nothing at all. On a good scenting day they may

run into their fox, if he goes straight; but *tempora si forent nubila*, on bad scenting days he escapes. *Exempli gratiâ*, we now relate how Will Headman succeeded a few days after in bringing another good fox to book, in a country wholly arable, under the most adverse and most unpropitious circumstances. The wind was in the west, with a cold-looking leaden sky, and the air was the reverse of soft and balmy; in short, those weather-wise collected at the place of meeting proclaimed it at once as a scentless morning. The covert to be drawn first was a large one, over a hundred acres, like the majority of woods in that country. Little spinnies and patches of gorse were very few and very far between.

"Well, Will," asked John Staveley, a genuine orthodox foxhunter, "what think you of the morning?"

"Queerish, sir. Nothing to be done without patience and perseverance, and—yes—a bit of luck also."

"Very true, Will, that's my opinion; but if you lose one fox you are pretty certain of finding another without much trouble."

"That's not our way of doing business, sir. When I find a fox worth attending to, I make a point of sticking to him as long as we can; and in the main I generally find this sort of thing pays best."

"Right, Will—quite right. That's the way to make good hounds for every day in the week. Never mind the weather."

"They will ride over un to-day, sir," Will Headman remarked, as he quietly slipped his hounds into covert. There was no noise, no "Yoicks in! hoics!" no cracking of whip by Jem to rouse a fox up from his kennel before found by hounds. The pack dashed away, thoroughly intent upon their own business, and requiring no encouragement to do it. They fly rapidly through the high wood, spread widely and eagerly over the thicker underwood, turn back at a signal from the horn when they reached the boundary of the hedge, and are now searching the lower section of the covert with an impetuosity which seems significant of a find. Their huntsman is with them, an occasional word of encouragement proceeding sometimes from his lips; yet they want no such incentive to do their work effectively. Every yard of the covert is drawn thoroughly and completely, yet there is not a whimper heard.

"I verily thought we should have found him here, Will," said John Staveley, who had followed the hounds through every part.

"So did I, sir; but here he is not, that's clear, although he has been here not long ago."

"Where now, Will, then?"

"I've been thinking, sir, that there's a little bit of a brake about two fields off, lying very snug and quiet under the wind, with a thick sedgy bottom to it, which it's more than likely a fox would fancy after such a night as last. There I think we shall find him, sir."

"Here! here! here! come away," cried Will

Headman; and with a few notes from his horn, the pack were quickly at his horse's heels. "Ah! there he is, sir, and no mistake," as the hounds dashed eagerly into the brake. "They'll have him up and out in a minute;" and so they did; but being headed on all sides save one, that nearest the river, he broke away at the bottom of the brake into the big wood first drawn, where he tried the earths, and then essayed an escapade at the top of the covert for another wood about two miles distant. The gentlemen, however, having by cutting corners got to this point before him, he was, of course, headed back, and another circuit under hazel and oak trees the result; but there was no pressure upon him, hounds hunting, and sometimes barely owning the scent.

"Ah, Will," exclaimed John Staveley, "just as I thought. No prospect of doing anything on such a day as this. I think I shall go home and do a bit of farming."

"Stop awhile longer, sir; there's no saying how things may alter; and then perhaps we may have a bit of luck at last, when nobody expects it."

"You could not handle a bad fox with everything against you, much less a good one."

"The good one for choice, sir; and if the hounds cannot hold to the line, I suppose I must."

"Then you really believe that this fox, evidently bent on travelling, is to be handled with a scent like this?"

"We shall do our best, sir, to accomplish that end."

"Then, by Jupiter Ammon! I'll stick to you."

"Thank ye, sir; that's more than many will do. Yet—hark! he's away! Jem's holloa at the bottom of the wood. Ah! he's some way before them, but holloaing and screaming won't answer the purpose. It must be all beagling to-day, Squire Staveley, up to a certain time; and after that I reckon upon a good finish."

Headman was not dilatory in reaching the spot where Jem had sounded his tocsin, and the pack settled down on the scent over a piece of early sown wheat on rather better terms than he expected; and the wind blowing also in their teeth, they scored away at a respectable pace for a couple of miles, up to the Holt, where their fox again tried the earths without benefit. Here, however, there being no horsemen in advance to head him, he dwelt not a moment longer than necessary to ascertain the fact that the door was closed, and he was off again towards the east ere Will Headman and his darlings had entered the western side of the covert. Jem was not quick enough this time to holloa him away, but a yokel did the office for him.

"Where's he gone, Bill?" asked Jem, riding up in hot haste.

"Over the plough—and a whopper he be."

"How long agone?"

"Handy half-an-hour, Jem."

"By your watch, eh?"

"Noa, dang it, I ha'ant got one."

"Why we hav'nt found him half-an-hour agone, in Cold Harbour Wood, so he must have come here

pretty quickly. Were his tongue out or in his mouth?"

"Out, sir, and he stopped to lap up a drop of water from the furrow; and then when I hollaed he just trotted on, as if there warn't nothing the matter, and nobody looking arter him."

"Cool! deuced cool!" muttered Jem. "This 'ill be a moonlight job, I expect; but master won't be denied as long as he's above ground; and here he comes, cheering 'em along, as if he were sartain of handling him in twenty minutes. Well, I'll tip him the office, and he can do as he likes about clapping on or no. Gone away," cried Jem, "for'ard away! aye, aye, that will do"—and Will Headman is seen crashing through the covert, cheering on his hounds, which are doing as well as can be expected.

"Viewed him, Jem?" he asked.

"No, master, gone a longsome time afore I got here. That chap sitting on the gate says half-an-hour."

"Then there is a precious deal better scent than I thought; but no, that's all gammon, he can't be two miles ahead of us."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"But reynard at last feels his strength giving way;
The hounds too, he hears, are close at his heels;
His eyesight grows dim,
There's a sinking within,
Which tells him too plainly, he's ate his last meal."

THE FOX CHASE.

Hunting run—A pulling horse—The bit of luck—Jem to the fore—Exchange no robbery—A new way of stopping earths—Fast and furious—Pounding in a ditch—Slow and sure—Jem has it all to himself.

IT is not very agreeable intelligence on a good scenting day to be told that your fox is a couple of miles ahead of you. What must it be, then, on a bad one? With the present system further pursuit of him under such circumstances must be abandoned, and the order at once given to draw for a fresh one, in the hope of No. 2 proving more odoriferous than No. 1; and the majority of hunting men—rather we should say riding men—in these fast days, prefer ten minutes' burst, best pace, to a good hunting run of an hour and forty. We are old-fashioned enough to delight in seeing the instinct and sagacity of the hound displayed, rather than his speed only; and, therefore, to follow Will Headman and his pack, now committed to the arduous task of trying to catch a good fox with a forbidding scent. The big woods are left behind, and the fox, having got a start, stretches boldly away over the open country. There is no merry cry of hounds,

although all cluster together, and press on in close column, the lead being conceded to the veterans, whom experience has taught how to make the best of a bad scent. Still they are moving—the blade of grass does not grow under their feet, when they meet with it in old ley or this year's seeds. O'er fallows—no tongue is heard; and yet, with old Saracen at head, the pace, such as it is, does not slacken. He knows and feels the line of the fox, and without saying a word about it presses resolutely forward, until he strikes the meuse in the hedgerow through which his game had passed; then, with one note only, gathering all to the front, he springs the fence, and through the next field of turnips the chorus swells and the pace increases.

"Ah! fallows again," exclaimed Will Headman, in disgust. "Summer fallowing is of some use; winter fallowing is of none, that I can see, except to stop hounds. At this rate he'll beat us blind; yet there's no saying—a bit of luck, perhaps; and here it is, out of fallow into the road, which means out of the frying-pan into the fire. Confound him! he's an artful dodger; but I've taken his measure once, if not twice, before this morning. There—they must work it out as long as they can, and when they can't I must help 'em."

Headman was holding his hounds quietly forward down the road, when overtaken by Mr. Staveley, who asked abruptly, "Where now, Will? He seems bent on mischief, but I don't quite understand the point he is making for."

"There is an old stone quarry, Squire, some ten

miles in advance, where I runned this gentleman last year, early in the season, and as the earth were not stopped, in course he beat us."

"Is the earth stopped now?"

"No, sir, not that I know of; we must not stop earths in our neighbour's country, and that old hole don't belong to us. However, he is running very straight for it as yet, and we may get a turn in our favour. Ah! there he has it; Jailor marks him down the middle of the road. Have at him, old fellow! we are safe to hit him any side when he crosses."

For half a mile down the road into a valley below, Jailor with old Saracen pertinaciously marked his pad, and then over the fence into a bit of veritable meadow the body of the pack dashed, running the whole length of the enclosure at more than half speed.

"We are warming up a little," remarked John Staveley; "but where's Jem? he has slipped us coming down the road, where the two lanes meet at the top of the village."

"Gone to get a stopping of baccy for his pipe, Squire, perhaps, or a glass of beer; but we don't want him just now, Jack will do all we requires."

"I did not think Jem was given to those mal-practices, smoking and drinking," continued Mr. Staveley.

"Nor I, sir; but I'm a-thinking he has smoked something to more purpose than a baccy pipe. They're a-running now, by Jingo, Squire, up that side of the hill, and there's a pretty little bit of

covert just above it. He may have stopped there a minute or two to look down on the pretty scenery below, seeing no cause to be in a hurry, as gentlemen tourists do, when time's no object."

"He is too far in advance, Will Headman, to be handled by you, notwithstanding your jokes."

"Then, joking apart, Squire, I intend to mask him before sun-down."

The fox had waited a few minutes in the covert, and when he poked his nose out the other side into a fallow field, where a plough-team was at work, a shrill scream from a cart-boy caused him to poke it in again, and hearing shooters along a hedgerow the other side of the fence, he deemed it prudent not to risk exposure to fire in that direction. Up wind he did not wish to go; so perforce he was obliged to consider awhile what course to pursue, and then tack round again for his point. Will Headman's rattlers improved their pace considerably by this movement, and the fast men began to press them.

"Steady, gentlemen, if you please," cried their huntsman, "they arn't going to run away from us yet."

"And I'll take good care they don't," muttered Sam Coventry, riding in atop of old Jasper, as he was jumping the fence.

"Hold hard, sir!" vociferated the master. "I won't allow my hounds to be knocked over in that fashion by you, sir, or anybody."

"Beg pardon, sir, but my horse pulled so, I could not hold him."

"Then ride wider of them, Mr. Coventry; the

fields are large enough for you to take a line of your own, if you could do such a thing, without maiming one of the best hounds in my kennel."

"I would hang every one of them," muttered Coventry; "a set of bow-wowing loitering brutes, always getting in a fellow's way, and Bill Headman to boot. I say, George," addressing his friend, "I won't stand any more bull-ragging from that old chap in buckskin and mahogany tops, and shall for the future turn thistle-whipper; they can't do things slower than Will Headman and his clod-crushers."

"Well, Sam, you can do as you please; but hounds can't run without a scent."

"Yes they can, Tracy, and I have seen them do it. Tom Harkaway makes them do it. Sure of a run with him; for if there's no scent at all, he takes them up at half speed for three or four miles to the next sure find, and there we are all right for another spree."

"Very well, Sam, then you had better smoke your weed comfortably on your road home. I shall stay to see the game played out, for, in my opinion, we shall have something to do presently, which will take the shine out of your highflyer."

"Then if you'll hand me a couple of cigars—mine were exhausted long ago at Cold Harbour Wood, where we sat shivering in the cold for an hour and a half, before this confounded old fox chose to break covert—I don't mind stopping a bit longer."

This conversation took place when the hounds had been brought to a check half way across the second

field from the brake, where Sam Coventry had knocked over old Jasper into the ditch, outside of which, when getting again upon his legs, without sustaining much damage, he was busily making a short line of his own, whilst the pack were being forced forward by horsemen over the scent.

"Here it is," cried the master; "hark to Jasper, Will."

"The old dog has it, sure enough;" and a toot from his horn brought the pack round in a minute. "Down wind again," muttered Will Headman; "that's his point, as I judged before."

"Then why not steal a march upon him?" asked John Staveley; "your hounds will bear lifting once in a way."

"Very true, sir; but I don't think we should mend matters much by lifting with a scent like this, and there is no covert big enough to hold him for any length of time between this and the old quarry hole he is making for. The hounds are working away well upon the line, and if we got their heads up, they wouldn't feel disposed to put them down again in the same persevering manner as now. 'Tisn't a day to take liberties, sir."

With patience and perseverance, the pack held to the line of their fox, occasionally assisted by their huntsman, for some seven miles over a heavy arable country, and the horses were beginning to feel the effects of going fetlock deep the greater part of the distance, not to mention the constant strain upon their sinews from the strong fencing, when Will Headman's ear caught the chattering of a magpie,

sitting upon a tall tree, at the end of a plantation just in sight.

"Ah! you are thought to bring bad luck to most folk," chuckled our huntsman; "but a good friend to hounds—quite as good as a whipper-in sometimes;" and as they reached the middle of the plantation, tongues began to be let loose right merrily, and away they went at the farthest end, with heads up and sterns down. "Now for the bit of luck, Mr. Staveley," cried Will Headman joyously, "if Jem is there before him, it's all right enough, and the cream of the thing is to come."

"Aye, aye, Will, I see now all about Jem's smoking his pipe."

"He's a wide-awake fellow, sir, and quick to take a hint; but this old fox, has got a deal of running in him yet, and to my thinking, there won't be any more riding over hounds. The wind has shifted a little, and the air feels warmer than it was an hour agone."

"We have become warmer Will from increased pace, and the fur on that old fox's back has been warmed also. The faster he flies, the better the scent. Up to this point, we have been almost walking after him."

"Yes, sir, that's true enough; but the wind has shifted, notwithstanding, and we are now nearly running up wind instead of down, which makes all the difference."

For a couple of miles, the hounds pressed forward with extended column, at three-parts speed; nearer and nearer they approach the earth in the old

quarry, and quicker beats the pulse in Will Headman's heart, as the distance becomes shortened. Jem he thought had not sufficient start to get there before him, and running to ground seemed poor consolation after such toilsome work to hounds and horses. "They deserve him, any way, he was thinking, when a shrill scream burst upon his ear, to which the hounds sped like lightning. Another and another, succeeded by a "Tally ho! forward;" and as they near the bottom of the brake in which stood the old quarry hole, a white figure on horseback was discerned winding round the hill side, with the leading couples.

"What the deuce is that?" asked Staveley, "along with the hounds now? By gad, it looks like a witch!"

"Not unlikely, Squire; the damsels in these parts are a lively lot; and I should not be surprised at a dairymaid's hunting hounds, if they came in her way. Well, they've got it all to themselves now, for I shan't be able to make a trot of it much farther. However, it don't much signify, Jem will be there or thereabouts, and he is pretty sure to finish him off in good style, though he don't much fancy slow work."

"Awfully slow, Sam," exclaimed George Tracy, as they were pounding away together. "Pluck up your spirits now, for the finishing burst. Jem has got hold of them, and twenty minutes, best pace will about finish him."

"Ten will finish my brute; there's no go left in him."

"Ah! that comes of larking when hounds are not running; I thought how it would be. Well, harden your heart, for here's a nasty murky-looking piece of water before us, and have it we must."

"I shall have some of it, Tracy, and no mistake, for my confounded brute never will jump water; but now he's sure to go into it for a guzzle."

"Well, hang it, Coventry! I can't stop till he has done drinking; but if you're under, old chap, I'll pull you out on *terra firma*—that's all that can be expected of a friend under such pressing circumstances."

Sam's horse dived as expected like a duck under water; but his rider had taken the precaution of throwing the stirrup leathers over his shoulders, and being a light weight, sprang clear of him to the opposite bank.

"Well done, Sam," cried George, whose horse had cleared the bank cleverly; "by gad! you ought to be at Astley's. Ta-ta, old fellow! Lots of chaps behind to drag him out, if he's worth the trouble."

George Tracy spurred away over the field to the next fence, which proved a yawner; and as he got over, loud cries for help assailed his ear, a little higher up, but no object met his view. "By gad!" he thought, "there must be some poor fellow come to grief in that dyke, and his horse, perhaps, atop of him. Well, he must get out as he can, the pace is too good." Another loud cry, smote his ear, and this time his heart also. "Confound it! I can't leave him in such a plight;" and riding up quickly, he said, "Holloa, old fellow, what's the row?"

"Knock my horse's brains out, will you?" the voice replied, "he is following me up the ditch, and trampling my legs to pieces—I can't get out of his way."

George saw at a glance how matters stood; and springing from his saddle, seized the reins of the floundering horse, and pulled him back upon his haunches, with his head against the bank.

"Now, sir, quick if you please;" and out crawled an elderly gentleman, with snow-white hair.

"Hurt?" asked George.

"Not much, thanks to Heaven and your assistance. This comes of riding thoroughbreds in a cramp country. I can never repay you, Captain Tracy, for your timely help; but I shan't forget it. Now, go on, never mind that brute."

"No, no, sir, I'll get him out for you, now I am about it. We are out of the race, but a brush more or less is not of much consequence; for good luck, however, we have a long green lane before us, beyond which I hear the hounds running, and Jem cheering them. Come on, sir, we shan't be the last, if we can't be the first."

Meanwhile, Will Headman with Squire Staveley were taking things quietly—far more quietly than they desired; yet there was no choice left to them, without second horses, of doing more, when three fire-eaters passed them, spurring their jaded horses to their last exertions.

"Good night, Mr. Headman," laughed the foremost; "slow and sure—eh?"

Will made no reply, but his look spoke unutterables.

"I hope we shall get there before those snobs," exclaimed Staveley.

"Breath is lost upon such as they be, squire. We shall see 'em again long before they sees the old fox in Jem's hand. The ground goes better now, sir; we have got upon dairy land, and in course the hounds, too, feel the difference."

For somewhat less than a mile, the trio kept a-head of the huntsman and Mr. Staveley, when, on doing a stiff in-and-out cleverly, although slowly, No. 1 was found standing over the prostrate form of his horse, with his glass to his eye, exclaiming, "Eh, demmit, what's the matter with him? Mr. Headman, what's your opinion?" as that individual pushed through the fence.

"Slow and sure, sir! good night! You must carry your own saddle home, that's all about it."

"Dem that old raven! but his croaking is true enough. The puff is out of him, and no mistake."

"On! on! on! still forward!" is the cry; and gallantly does the old fox now put forth his utmost speed to distance his pursuers. Hitherto he had not been pressed, but now came that pressure when he felt it most oppressive. There was life in the old fox yet. Foiled by Jem in his purpose of taking refuge in the quarry hole, he now set his head straight for another stronghold four miles distant; but having reckoned on a bad scent, as before, he was mistaken, or rather overtaken, before he could accomplish his purpose. Jem and the rattlers were close in his wake; and the former, now having it all his own way, capped and cheered them on at such a terrific pace, that he got

their heads up to a view over a large pasture field, and they ran into their fox before he could reach the fence. Jem's "Whoo-hoop!" was heard for miles down wind, and glad enough were the few select still struggling on to hear it.

"He's got him in hand now," cried Will Headman; "but how his mare could have lived with 'em, that's the wonder."

Some half-a-dozen men staggered into the field with beaten horses, where stood Jem under an old oak tree, the fox suspended on one of its lower branches, and the hounds baying around him.

"Holloa, Jem," said Headman, "what have you been doing? Your chestnut mare is turned into a grey horse, and there's no coat on your back."

"The story's soon told, master. Finding the mare could not do it in time, I spied doctor's old grey, which I knowed to be a good one, tied up to a green door at the end of the village; so I thinks exchange ain't no robbery, and I slips off the mare, and into doctor's saddle, leaving her in the grey's place."

"Hah! hah! hah!" laughed John Staveley, "a capital trick, by Jove! but where's your coat Jem?"

"Well, sir, 'twere a very near thing. I got to the mouth of the earth just about a second before the old fox, having hitched up doctor's horse to a thorn bush, and were standing there, when down he rushes at me like a lion, and, you wouldn't believe it, tried to run between my legs; so I were obliged to knock him off his by shying my cap at him, and then it was, sir, I first holloa'd him, as he turned away; but thinking he might try it again, and

knowing master's objection to stop a neighbour's earths, I stripped the bit o' pink off my back, and laying it over the hole, jumped into the saddle, and were with 'em as soon as they com'd up: and you knows the rest, sir."

"No, I don't, Jem, but can guess it; and here's a sovereign for that fox's brush, which you have outmanœuvred so cleverly."

CHAPTER XL.

Riding a willing horse to death—General bad treatment of the equine race—Meeting of the four winds—George Tracy gets a *quid pro quo*—Will Headman on turf—Jem and his thoroughbred—The old squire, John Staveley—Scurry from a gorse-brake over the open downs.

Will Headman's prognostications became facts on the following morning, when three dead horses were brought to the kennel, victims to the ignorance and merciless conduct of their riders on the previous day. Accidents, we know, will befall the best horsemen and hunters, and we know also that horses will do their utmost to live with hounds as long as they are able to do so; but to whip and spur a beaten horse to death is a decided act of cruelty, which no man possessing a particle of pity would perpetrate. The majority of mankind, we are obliged to confess—and, we are grieved to add, the majority of womankind also—regard horses more in the light of steam-engines than animals composed of flesh and blood, heart and lungs, like ourselves. We have known ladies—many very kind, affectionate, compassionate beings in social life; philanthropic, saint-like in their intercourse with the fallen, or miserable, or poor, or destitute—Sisters of Mercy, in fine—but Proserpinish in regard to unfortunate horses when linked to their carriage. Why is it? How is it that such inconsistencies are daily, hourly seen in the

conduct of those, who, save for these glaring cruelties, might justly claim the title of ministering angels? Must we assign it to ignorance or indifference? Charity would suggest the first as a palliative excuse. We are loth to attribute it to the latter. It has been said, "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" but we say, when the Bible and the laws of our country punish cruelty to all animals with severity, the most ignorant can scarcely be unacquainted with the divine, as well as human, injunction, "to be merciful to their beasts." No excuse can be made for "riding a willing horse to death."

Will Headman's next appearance in public was in a district wholly unlike that from which he obtained the hunting run above recorded. There lay a small patch of gorse, surrounded on all sides by down land, and in one direction extending for several miles, without a twig to shelter a fox from his pursuers; and thither were seen flocking from north, east, south, and west equestrians of all denominations, from four different hunts, to witness the performance of Will Headman's rattlers over the open, the news of his late exploits having spread in all directions. It was a gala meet for the fast men, and Sam Coventry had selected a thoroughbred for the occasion. George Tracy, also, was conspicuous for the neatness of his attire, and that quiet and unassuming manner which distinguishes the well-bred gentleman from the snob. Whilst talking with Coventry, the elderly gentleman with white hair, to whom he had rendered assistance a

few days previously, approached him and offered his hand, saying, "Good morning, Captain Tracy."

The salutation was returned most courteously, yet deferentially, with uplifted hat, displaying a fine forehead, encircled by dark-brown wavy hair.

"I hold only a commission as lieutenant, sir, although my friends are pleased to assign me a higher rank," he answered, smiling.

"I have a few words for your ear only, Captain Tracy, if you will ride with me a little way out of the crowd;" and when apart from observation, the elderly gentleman presented him with a small packet, saying, "If you will read the enclosed, not now, but when you return home, you will find that I have not addressed you impertinently as Captain Tracy."

George felt so taken aback, that he really did not know what to say or do, but sat as one bewildered in the saddle, holding the paper in his hand.

"Put that in the breast pocket of your coat, Captain Tracy," said the elderly gentleman impatiently, "and come along, the hounds are moving off."

George mechanically obeyed the order, and on meeting with Coventry again, the latter asked, "Who's your friend, George?"

"I cannot exactly tell, although his features seem familiar. We have met before, butw here I cannot remember."

"Well, that is Colonel Hamilton, one of our county members, a man of considerable influence, both in town and country; lots of tin, and people say a great favourite at the Horse Guards. Worth

knowing, old fellow, as he might give you a lift up another step in the ladder; but now we have other fish to fry, and my impression is, there won't be much slow work this morning, if that bit of gorse holds the animal. What a lot of swells! and such a gathering of all nations and languages from the four winds (*i.e.*, four adjoining hunts) I have never seen drawn together: over three hundred, and most of them prepared to do their worst for Will and the pack, and the best for themselves. The old master is blithesome and gay," continued Sam, "flattered, no doubt, by the compliments thus paid to him by so large an assemblage of sporting men to meet his hounds. Mr. Headman, as he is generally called, looks as if he had got out on the wrong side of his bed this morning; but there is a cynical mischievous expression in Jem's eye, mounted on his Newmarket second—how the old Squire got hold of him, I cannot imagine—which tells us plainly enough that he won't be distanced in the race by anybody out. By Jove, George! what a huntsman that fellow would make! All alive O! though looking as demure—well, we won't be vituperative—as a certain sort of lady at a christening."

"Jem's a capital fellow in his place, Sam, and knows all about it, but is no more suited to hunt hounds now than you are. A man may be a first-rate captain, who has not had sufficient experience to shine as a general in the army. Jem is too fast for everyday work, and would miss his headpiece sadly if thrown upon his own resources. He will grow older and wiser in a few years more, and then

perhaps turn out a good huntsman, though not as a certain sequence." Well, we are on the move now, after the learned in such matters have expressed their opinion on the merits and condition of the pack; and I heard one jealous chap, who has gained a high reputation in the shires, remark, "Ah! the vale is their province; they can't go over the open." "Can't they?" sneered old Fowler of ours, who heard the observation. "You'll soon be satisfied on that point." Another fellow said, "If there is a fox in that patch of short gorse, they can't get into it to get him out of it."

"Now, Will," cried the old Squire, "let them go; and you will oblige me, gentlemen," he said courteously, addressing the cavalcade of horsemen already pressing forward, "if you will keep on this side the covert, and leave the other open for the fox to have a start. Don't be nervous, gentlemen, my hounds are so heavy and slow that they can't run away from you—can they, Mr. Staveley?" appealing to that first-rate sportsman.

Staveley appeared to be rather dull of hearing that morning, as he made no reply; but he was gathering up his reins, and close to Will Headman, when his hounds sprang into and buried themselves beneath the dark green covert. In a few seconds the surface of the gorse began to wave to and fro, like a field of standing corn bending before the wind, then heads appeared here and there above it, and ever and anon the forms of Will Headman's favourites were observed springing clean out of it, with a short sharp note.

"Aye, have at him, my lads, push him out;" and push him out they did, as the fox, finding himself surrounded by his enemies, leaped out from among them, and actually ran along upon the top of the thick gorse for some few yards.

"Now, gentlemen," cried the master, riding up to the dense column drawn together at the very point he wished the fox to break, "let me entreat you to wheel to the right or left, and leave this space open. It is your concern more than mine, if you wish to see a run, for I don't care much about it; spoil your own sport, if you like, my riding days are past; and if he is chopped in covert so much the pleasanter for me."

The old squire's reproof produced a certain effect. The ground was vacated immediately, and no sooner left open than the fox broke away over it. Then arose a Babel of tongues, screeching and screaming, and the column of horsemen rushed rapidly to the fore, in pursuit of the flying animal and a single hound, ere the pack had left the covert.

"Hold hard, gentlemen!" cried the excited master; "for goodness sake, hold hard one minute!" On they go still. "Then go, and be d—d!" he muttered; "they shall beat you yet." And with a shrill scream from the old squire, the hounds were hustled off by Jem from the line of another fox they were hunting in a contrary direction.

"Now, Will," as they caught the scent, and flashed rapidly away upon it, "these pacemen shall soon see the difference between ploughed land and turf. Away, away! and mind, Jem," as the second

in command passed his master, "you've got a thoroughbred under you as well as Will Headman."

"I shan't forget it, sir;" touching his cap.

The master would have been perfectly justified, under such audacious behaviour from his field, in sending Jem to stop the single hound, and go direct away with the body of the pack after the fox they were hunting, and which had just broken covert in the opposite direction—in fact, such is the rule to be followed in such cases. The old master knew all about that, and might have had a good run to himself; but, to use a vulgar expression, "his monkey was up," and he resolved to beat the fast men with their own weapons just for once, and to prove to them that hounds could beat horses.

"Come along, Jem," said Headman, "put them on: the squire wills it. What's missing?"

"Hecuba and Hotspur, master; and those two young devils won't lose sight of the brush till they get hold on it."

"They can't hunt, Jem, and shouldn't if they would; so there is nothing for it but to get 'em clear out of the crowd, and then we shall see who can catch 'em again."

It was contrary to Will Headman's principle and practice to act as he was obliged to upon such an emergency; but he was too good a soldier to disobey orders from his commander-in-chief, knowing well what his intention was. Mounted on two thoroughbred horses, more notorious for their staying than fleeting properties, Will Headman and Jem drew

steadily through the host of horsemen, and in less than two miles the hounds were running at the top of their speed, and not a soul within a hundred yards of them.

"Aye, aye, master, this will do!" cried Jem, in ecstacies; "this scampering over downs ain't unpleasant after that heavy work in the vale: my nag can go like lightning."

"Then hold him together, Jem, for the race is only begun. This is a straight running old gentleman afore us, or he wouldn't have faced the wind in this manner, and you knows he saved his brush last year by getting to ground in sight of the pack over yonder hill."

"Yes, master, I recollects all about it; but he ain't going to serve us that trick to-day. You don't want me now, I suppose?"

"No, Jem; but you can't do it at this pace; and there's no doctor's horse to be found hitched up at a green door if yours fails you."

Jem drew ahead, notwithstanding; and as he sped along his thoughts escaped him, or, in other words, he was thinking aloud.

"Master's a deal heavier in the saddle than I am, and in course I couldn't leave him without some excuse; but I know the old squire's notions about this spree, and if I don't handle him long before any of them chaps get up, my name ain't James."

The race now commenced in earnest. George Tracy, Sam Coventry, and half-a-dozen light weights on thoroughbred horses, strove fiercely to cut down Jem and take the lead from him; but our first whip

proved too good a jockey for them all. Pass him they could not; and the further they went, the further went the hounds before them.

"Now, Coventry," cried George Tracy, as they rode neck and neck together, "now is your time to ride over some of these slow *bow-wowing brutes*, as you called them the other day. The old squire is not here to rate you."

"Who would have thought it, George—not I, certainly—that they could go such a trimming pace over the turf? By gad, I can't catch them."

"They have nothing to carry, and your horse and mine have, that makes some difference; and then, you see, the fox is close before them."

"I can't see him if you can."

"Then cast your eye forward, and you will discern something like a rook skimming along, straight ahead of them."

"If that's the fox, he's a precious little one, and I wonder how he can go such a pace."

"The distance makes him look small; but he is as big and stout an old warrior as I have seen for many a day, although the hounds are now getting nearer and nearer to his brush at every stride; and have him they will in less than another mile."

"Oh, me! what a purl that chap has got to the right," exclaimed Sam; "that comes of riding over old cartways covered with grass, which none but a wide-awake fellow knows how to take. By Jove! it must have been a stunner, for, although up in the saddle, he is riding away from the hounds."

CHAPTER XLI.

The four-mile race—Danger of crossing old trackways—George Tracy disabled—A lucky fall—The pace that kills—Ups and downs—The squire's joy on seeing his hounds beat the field—Who-hoop!

In the good old times, long before the birth of MacAdam, packhorses and carts of rude construction were generally used to convey goods from one town to another, across moors and down lands; and even to this day some of these trackways still remain to give evidence of the use to which they were formerly assigned. These ancient highways were not restricted, as in later times, to so many feet or yards for their lawful boundary, beyond which no man might venture to trespass by hoof or wheel without subjecting himself to a *casus belli*, or law process. It was not the fashion then to fill up ruts with broken stones; and, in consequence, when the ground became miry in riding over, deviations were made right or left to go upon firmer turf. Since the increasing ardour for cultivation, there are few of these ancient landmarks remaining in the present day, except in very isolated districts; but where they are yet to be met with and encountered, the stiffest country is not more prolific of falls than crossing these blind horse-traps. Were the width of only one or two cart tracks to be covered, a good rider might accomplish it with a jump or two, without being brought into trouble; but a dozen of deep ruts

covered over with long grass, cannot be tripped over by a half-blown horse with a loosish rein, except on the usual terms of heels over head.

Such an obstacle occurred in the burst we were about describing, midway between find and finish; and the number down at the sweeping was—we were going to say, marvellous—yet there was no marvel in the case. Every man had fixed his eye upon the hounds, as they were running away from him; and, there being no fences to crane at or funk, each thought of riding over the Newmarket course or a nicely kept bowling green; and to a certain point all went pleasantly and comfortably enough, although their horses did not go quite so rapidly as anticipated. In short, every man fancied himself upon a thoroughbred in tip-top condition, simply because he was riding a race over turf; and we need scarcely note their disgust when disabused of these day-dreams by a sudden change into midnight, when hosts of stars seemed glittering around them. As in the charge of cavalry at Balaklava, every third man of the first rank went down; the majority coming out of the vale, and not accustomed to such ins and outs without seeing a fence before them, went down also; but the hill men rode more carefully, knowing the risk to life and limb in going fast over such treacherous ground, and the ruck extending some two miles *en arrière,* profited by the example set them by their betters in pace.

"Steady, squire," cried Will Headman to Mr. Staveley, as they were approaching the trackways, "pull him up, sir, into a trot; it can't be done

otherwise, except by accident. A double ox fence is milk-and-water to such things as these; and going at water ever so wide—barring the Severn, and other rivers not jumpable—is quite harmless in comparison. You gets your go under soft and soapy like, and comes up not much the worse for the dipping; but here, as that there Count says, who comes over from Johnny Crapaud's land, 'tis all 'de contraire—your horse's nose goes into de ground, and you fly over de ground;' and the chances are in favour of a man's spine being disarranged without the assistance of Mr. Calcraft. Steadily does it, sir, and a pull up for a second or so over these ruts will give our horses just time to catch their second wind, and then we shall sail away as pleasantly as ever. Jem's ahead of us, squire, and his nag has got the foot of mine, with two stone less upon his back, which goes for more than most folks fancy. As for catching him, squire, or the hounds, that's all moonshine. We can't do it. '*C'est impossible,*' as the Count says,—who, I expect, from his manner of operating, will come to grief afore he gets t'other side of these crossings—it's just the sort of trap to catch a mounseer. Heads up and tails up—all that sort of thing; instead of minding where he is going to and keeping his horse together. Now, squire, for the run in. Come along, sir, the best foot foremost." And away sped Headman, on his bit of blood, at an astonishing pace.

But every one knows, who knows anything about it, that blood will tell in man, horse, or hound. The better they are bred the better they will go; and

Will Headman had been placed upon the back of a big one, over sixteen hands high, which could carry his weight and take a good place in a four-mile race —for such this was without mistake: and, like the trial between horses and hounds, some years ago, over the Beacon course at Newmarket, the hounds had the best of it. The old squire's hounds had not been trained upon legs of mutton or sheep's trotters, but they were in first-rate condition, from hard work and proper diet; and the four miles were accomplished in a few seconds under eleven minutes.

"Now, Sam, they have him!" cried George Tracy. "That black hound has, I see, turned him on the point of the hill, and the second catches him by the back, and the only fellow within three hundred yards of them is Jem. You and I hope to be in second and third; and Will Headman has been making up leeway at such an extraordinary pace that he must be fourth; and I would not undertake to say that he cannot pass both of us yet."

The triumph of the old master—who, by the way, had set to work right manfully in this struggle, resolved to show what he had done, and could do still although past the years allotted to mankind—was complete when he beheld his first whipper-in alone, with the fox held over his head, and the hounds lying and standing around him, and not another horseman yet within fifty yards of him.

"Now, gentlemen," he exclaimed, as some of the stiff-necked ones began dropping in one by one on cock-tailed horses, "you see we can beat you with all the odds against us. Our hounds have just

passed through all of you easily, and my first whip is the first man up at the finish."

"The quickest thing I ever saw in my life, sir," said the master of a neighbouring pack. "I congratulate you upon such a brilliant affair."

"We do not care much about brilliant things, sir," was the reply. "Once in a season, just to see how hounds can run together, is well enough; but this is foxracing not foxhunting. There is no opportunity for the display of talent in the huntsman or sagacity in the hound. A Newmarket lad could do quite as well here as the most experienced of professors, and a lot of curs, colly dogs, and lurchers run over the ground as fast as well-bred foxhounds."

"I can't hold him up any longer, master," said Jem to Will Headman; "he ain't so light a weight as you seem to think, and my arms are tired of the job; besides which we may find another fox, and kill him in like manner, before half the gents as started gets up—if ever they gets up at all, which seems very dubious. I never seed such an example made of hossmen. There is a tail of 'em for two miles at least, and lots of nags all over the downs."

"Give him to me, then, Jem:" and Headman, taking the fox, held him for a few seconds over his head; and then, with a scream which none could imitate or exceed, threw the carcass high up into the air, and the bones were broken ere it reached the ground by the expectant pack.

George Tracy, however, and Sam Coventry do not put in an appearance at the winding up of this perfect performance in its way. Where are they?

There is a little group of horsemen collected around an object lying on the turf, about half a mile below, and that object is the prostrate body of George Tracy. He was riding into the finish cheerfully and carelessly, when, on stepping on what appeared to him as firm turf as any before crossed, his horse floundered and fell, throwing him heavily, and rolling over him. Coventry sprang instantly to his assistance, picked him up, and was endeavouring to administer a dose of *aqua vitæ* from his flask, when Colonel Hamilton reached the spot.

"What has happened?" he asked, quickly.

"Tracy is, I fear, seriously hurt," was Sam's reply; "quite stunned,—and I can't bring him round."

"Let me try, then, whilst you ride for a surgeon; there are two out with the hounds."

"By all that's lucky," cried Sam, "here is Mr. Danvers just coming up, who is as clever at this sort of thing as in crossing country after hounds."

The doctor was soon out of his saddle, and kneeling by Tracy's side, feeling for his pulse, and examining his body.

"Concussion of the brain, colonel, and, to add to his misery, a broken collar-bone."

"What can be done?" asked the colonel.

"We must get him down to the nearest inn as soon as possible—better to a farmhouse, where there would be less disturbance."

"He shall be taken to my house, doctor, which is not far distant, and fortunately my carriage is on the ground somewhere. I will go for it directly."

By the time Colonel Hamilton returned, Tracy had in a great degree recovered his consciousness and Sam having assisted him into the carriage, gave his horse in charge to the colonel's groom, and then again rode off to join the cavalcade now in motion to draw for a second fox. George Tracy being a great favourite in the hunt, anxious inquiries were made by his friends of Sam Coventry.

"He is not, I fancy, so badly hurt as I first thought. George could not have fallen to such advantage anywhere else; and, taking the pros and cons into account, I have a shrewd suspicion that it will be the luckiest fall he ever got in his life. His collar-bone will soon be all right, with a clever doctor to attend to him, and a beautiful girl to while away his pains and aches with her silvery tones. Egad! George is a good-looking fellow, a favourite with women, and the colonel seems to have taken a decided fancy to him. Under such auspicious circumstances it is not very difficult to guess the result of his being laid up as an invalid at the Grange." The latter part of his speech was addressed to John Staveley in a low voice.

"The colonel is a very particular man in some respects," remarked Staveley, "and the *on dit* is that he has assigned his only child to Lord John."

"Who is old enough to be her father," added Sam.

"No matter; he was always considered a martinet in the field, and is not likely to be trifled with when his mind is made up upon any point."

CHAPTER XLII.

"The pack full opening, various, the shrill horn
Resounding from the hills, the neighing steed
Wild for the chase, and the loud hunter's shout."

Scurry the second—A dip into the vale—Harmony of huntsman and first whip—Jem and his master—Over the hills and far away—Dropping sterns and dropping astern—Blood and condition will tell—'Up the hill, spare me'—Trying it on foot—Jem beats his master at pedestrianism—Short, sharp, and decisive.

"Well, Will, what next?" asked the old master of his huntsman. "This little burst has opened their pipes, and now they want something better to do. We shall find a fox, I suppose, at Hazelgrove, under the hill?"

"Yes, sir, that's a pretty sure find; but I'm a thinking there's that other we whipped off from the gorse not likely to have left the downs yet awhile, and I can partly guess where he is. Those gents, sir, want one more gallop of this sort just to satisfy 'em quite entirely that the hounds can beat 'em out and out, and then we can have a nice quiet hunting run in the vale to finish with; and I'll undertake to say, however moderate the pace, there arn't a horseman out who can ride over 'em. They are nearly pumped out already, sir, and one more go over this turf will just put 'em all in their right places."

"Then, Will, let them have it."

"And so they shall," muttered Jem between his

teeth; "we arn't going to be sneezed at by these hurry-scurry riders from t'other hunts, who com'd down on purpose to show us the trick. I raythcr thinks they'll go home wiser than they set out; and, although they do say all the wise men come from the east, I've a notion we of the west can show 'em a trick or two worth knowing."

Some six miles back from the point where the first fox had been brought to hand in a style so satisfactory as to elicit general applause from all who could reach the spot, lay a small plantation, overhanging a beautiful grass vale, and there Headman fancied the second fox might have waited awhile, as he had not been followed by hounds a hundred yards from the gorse; and his conjectures proved correct; for no sooner had the pack been thrown into it than the fox bundled out of it, not quite in view, however, and down the hill he went, without hesitation; and the pack, catching sight of him as he descended, set to running again a terrific pace. Taking it as granted that they were now committed to a clipper in the low-lands, the majority of the field rattled down after them, bent on mischief.

"They won't run away from us here, master Jem," cried Tom Harkaway, belonging to the B. C. Hunt, "the fences will stop them; they can't creep through them as fast as we can jump over them."

"Our hounds never think of creeping through hedges like yours, Mr. Harkaway—they be bred too high for that sort of low muddling work; so come along, and I'll soon pump you out, my hearty," he muttered, as he went over the first wide double with

a swing which none but a thoroughbred could accomplish.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, as Tom Harkaway got a nasty one into the far ditch. "You don't seem to get over 'em quite so easy as you expected. Very fine riding," chuckled Jem. "These hill men don't know anything about double ditches and fences; 'tain't in their line—a donkey could jump the biggest fence in their country. Ride over our hounds! That's a good joke. Ha! ha! Come up, Duchess," as he landed his mare over a sunk fence into a gentleman's park.

The pressure, however, proving too sharp, the fox made short work of it in the vale, having turned again back for the downs, evidently with the intention of trying the earths in the gorse from which he had been at first dislodged. He had dipped sufficiently deep, notwithstanding, into the vale to draw down the whole cavalcade after him; and now ensued a struggle more severe than the first race over the open, the fox having made a circuit over about a mile of the very stiffest enclosures before tacking round, and the pace did not slacken.

Will Headman was now to the fore, the light weights being unable to take the lead from him through the stiff blackthorn fences, which they could not grapple with like men of greater power in the saddle. During this semicircular burst our huntsman maintained his place and reputation as a first-class rider to hounds, *nulli secundus*. Once let the lead be taken from a huntsman to foxhounds by any one of his hunt, and his authority is gone. There

are solitary exceptions, when he may by accident be thrown out, and fast races over the downs where lighter weights eclipse him; but in everyday work, the man who cannot hold his position as first fiddle is not the right man in the right place. If otherwise, his only excuse can be that he is too badly horsed to be with his hounds. The old squire took especial care that no such charge as this should be placed to his account. His men were well horsed: they knew it, and did credit to their master's judgment in providing them with animals so well fitted for their requirements. Will Headman, and his first whip, Jem, were paragons of perfection in their line of business. Two superior to them in all respects could not have been found throughout her Majesty's dominions; and although Jem, as *avant courier*, might occasionally take advantage of the position when his master, as he called him, was not up, yet did he know his duties too well ever to play him false, acting fairly and honestly as a *locum tenens* until his superior came up. There were no jealous feelings between huntsman and first whipper-in—too commonly the case, and as commonly subversive of sport in the field. Jem regarded Will Headman in the same light that a schoolboy looks up to a clever kind preceptor; and Will Headman repaid his pupil's attachment and deference to him by a sort of fatherly interest in all he did. Jem was admitted into all his arcana, or mysteries of the science; neither was he excluded from the kennel, and kept in the dark as to the pedigrees of hounds, breedings, and crossings, and other little matters of

that kind. With such mutual confidence, it was not surprising to find the working of the establishment in such harmonious order.

Jem, from his position as first whip, being at the far end of the plantation when the fox first broke away, had got the first start with the hounds, and it was his business to keep close to them, but not to interfere with their proceedings before the huntsman came up; and he had been too well instructed to think of handling them so long as they could feel a scent. Being a light weight also, he could ride down hill—the most dangerous of all riding—much faster than thirteen stone would consider necessary; and hounds, having nothing to carry, can go down declivities much faster than horses with their riders. The hill overhanging the vale was nearly as steep as the roof of a slate-covered house; and Will Headman effected his descent by making use of his horse's hind legs as a sledge—for, knowing the danger of sidelings on such an emergency to be productive of sidelong rollings and overturnings, he put his head straight, his hocks and tail acting the part of rudder. A horse cannot fall forward going down hill if held in this position, and it is equally obvious that he cannot fall backwards, if properly guided. Let him diverge to the right or left, and "earth-biting" is the certain result; and the rollings and catastrophes to the unskilled in horsemanship were grievous to relate.

Once down the hill, Headman felt, like many others, a deal more comfortable in his saddle, and the strides of his Newmarket second soon brought

him into nearer relationship with his hounds; and the glance of his eagle eye detected in a few minutes the sudden swerving of the chase to the left, of which he took immediate advantage, and nicked in just at the critical time as their heads were again turned towards the hill.

"Ah," he muttered, "I see it all. He hadn't start enough for Hazel Grove, and now means the gorse again. Hang it! going down such a hill is bad enough; but I'll warrant we all went down a deal quicker than ever we shall go up."

Will's surmises proved something more than mere guesses as to this part of the performance. The ascent was in truth a choker to all save fox and hounds. Horsemen could not make a trot even by tortuous windings and tackings, and there was the pack before their eyes, going up at such a pace! Will Headman tried it on foot—so did Jem; but the latter, being as light as a feather in comparison with his master, took precedence in pedestrianism. Jem could run where his superior could only make a walk of it, blowing like a grampus the while: and, as a natural result, the first whip had the best of this up-hill game. Ere, however, Jem reached the top, the hounds were over the downs and far away, going at racing pace as before, and they ran from scent to view, pulling down their fox within half a mile of the gorse entirely by themselves. Jem was again the first man up; but nought remained of the fox save his head, which Chancellor was carrying about in triumph.

"Halves, old fellow!" said Jem, catching him by

the scruff of his neck; "I wants his nose, and you shall have the rest."

"Will Headman," said John Staveley, who was switching his big brown horse along at a tremendous pace, "this is a glorious finish to our down meet. These jealous men from the other hunts can't go home and laugh at us, that's one consolation. They have had a pretty good dusting this morning, and I'll engage have never seen hounds run so fast in their lives."

"All very well in its way, squire, and I'm glad it has been in our power to show them that our hounds can run as well as hunt. They have made clean work of it this burst, and in course, by the time we reaches 'em there won't be so much as a pad left. No matter—they can see what's been done, and I hope Jem was in time to save the brush."

Ten minutes after about fifty horsemen of the three hundred got up to the spot where the fox had been dispatched so summarily, and some twenty minutes were allowed for other stragglers to come in, during which the merits of the sport were discussed, and voted unanimously the finest ever witnessed.

"Now then, I suppose," said Mr. Palmer, the master of the B.C. Hunt, "home is the next order of the day, since we have had galloping enough—at least, I can speak for myself."

"Oh no, sir," replied Headman; "our hounds wants a good hour or two more, just to get their heads down again after this wild work; and master's orders were to draw Hazel Grove if this here fox was killed on the downs."

"A very wise resolve; and as Hazel Grove lies in my way home, it suits my book to a nicety; besides which such a scenting day may not fall to our lot for another month. *Carpe diem* is my motto; so come along.

"Well, Mr. Staveley," said the master of the B.C. Hunt, "although of the opinion that enough is as good as a feast, I will follow you into the vale."

"And if benighted there," added John Staveley, "there is bed and board for yourself, and a loose box for your horse, at my place, and a hearty good welcome."

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Each season has its joys, 'tis true,
And none should reason spurn;
And those who nature rightly view,
Enjoy them in their turn.

"The angler, racer, courser, shot,
As each to each is born;
But the season of seasons—is it not?—
When the huntsman winds his horn."

"Sub Jove frigido"—The foxhunter's season When a fox is not a fox Distinguishing characteristics of well-bred foxhounds—Making the best of a bad scent Will Headman's descent into lower regions—Hazel Grove—Forcing a fox—A cool calculator nearly outwitted—The afternoon fox—Barren downs and luxuriant pastures.

A GOOD scenting morning may be, and often is, succeeded by a bad scent in the afternoon, during the winter months which constitute the season of foxhunting. It so happens that the foxhunter is debarred from the usual enjoyment of sunshine and genial weather which cheer another sportsman, whether handling rod or fowling-piece. Angling, grouse, partridge, and pheasant shooting are not pursued as our sport is, *sub Jove frigido*. The atmosphere is not so frigid that they cannot derive some enjoyment from the balmy breezes by which they are surrounded, even should their game prove too scanty to fill creel or bag. There are two causes which prevent our sport commencing before the winter season sets in. Foxes are not considered as

foxes until the 1st of November. They are not full grown before that time, and hedges are not denuded of their foliage even then; moreover, foxhunting would not be tolerated by agriculturists whilst their corn remained standing in the field. On these accounts, therefore, the opening day for foxhunters is fixed for the 1st of November by general consent, since foxes may be lawfully killed, like hares and rabbits, every month in the year. From experience, old sportsmen know that cold weather, frost, hail, snow, and chilling storms militate greatly against scent; and the wonder is that foxhounds should be able, in the face of all these dampers, to hold the line of their game at all. Use has been called second nature, and hounds, from becoming used to fight through all these inclemencies, adapt themselves to the difficulties to be encountered.

It has been truly said that no animal of the canine species possesses so fine a nose as a thoroughbred foxhound, and from experience we have good cause to endorse this opinion. We have seen foxhounds stoop to hunt hare, which beat all the old blue mettled sort in the pack out and out at questing, as it is called—*i.e.*, speaking to the trail and hunting her afterwards over every variety of soil; and this was done by hounds purchased from an old established foxhound kennel, which had been proved staunch to a fox scent only for three seasons.

Beckford tells us a story—a true one, no doubt—of a foxhound belonging to a neighbouring pack, which joined his harriers one day by accident; and, as he ran faster and turned quicker with the scent

than his own currant jelly dogs, he hit off every check, and helped them to kill a brace of hares. This fact not only proves the sagacity of a foxhound, but his superiority of nose, even beyond that of harriers; and we have seen pointers with a foxhound cross conspicuous alike for their enduring qualities and quickness in finding their game. The most striking characteristics of well-bred foxhounds is the pace with which they will carry a middling scent, when harriers would be hunting and bow-wowing over it.

Will Headman, nothing loth, descended from the breezy downs into a country much better suited to his weight and taste; and, after a trot of some six or seven miles, reached the renowned covert called Hazel Grove, notorious for a sure find and a straight hard running fox. It was not a very big coppice, nor a little one—a betwixt-and-between—but big enough to hold a fox for an hour, if not disposed to leave it. Forcing him from such a place was "all my eye and Betty Martin," the crude derivation of this old adage being from *Oh! mihi beatus Martini,* as we suppose most people know; but how this became a byeword amongst the heathen we are at a loss to conjecture. Certain, however, it is, that a fox won't leave a good thick covert of sixty or seventy acres, unless it suits his convenience to do so; in fact, he might wear out the best pack of hounds by ringing the changes upon them round and round the boundaries of it, without the risk of their tearing his carcase to pieces. It is a great mistake to suppose a knowing old fox can be frightened by the cry of

hounds, screeching of huntsmen and whippers-in, or cracking of whips, and made to leave his stronghold one moment earlier than it pleases him to vacate it. We have witnessed the *nonchalance* of these wily animals thousands of times, and even when pressed by hounds, their apparently thorough contempt for their enemies. Whilst fresh in physical power, as yet untried and unabated, they seem regardless of the risk they incur by running into the mouths of the hounds, and more afraid of a pink jacket outside the wood than forty spotted skins within it. Headed back almost into their open jaws is an event of everyday occurrence; but it is not often they are tripped up by such an audacious act.

One of the most barefaced things we remember was perpetrated by an old fox, who sat up on his haunches in the very next field to a small covert, whilst the hounds were running merrily upon his scent and certainly not two hundred yards behind his brush; and there he sat for a second or two, as if calculating the time when he should be obliged to go faster. Nothing could exceed the indignation of Charles, our first whip, on witnessing such an insult to decency on the part of a fox. He hollaed him, but trudge on he would not until it suited his pleasure; and when we reached the spot where sat Charles screeching, he said, "Well, sir, I hope we shall take the shine out of that old devil, for, of all the impudent brutes in fox-skin, I never seed his equal," telling us the occurrence.

"We shan't handle him to-day, then," was our reply, "for he seems to know we cannot do it."

"I'll try hard, master, and so of course will you; and if he beats us both he is a good un, and no mistake."

This old fox, however, did contrive to beat us at last; but it was a very near thing, and he never lived to boast of it. He led us a tremendous dance over miles of country, and, at the last, crossed a deep and rapid river, over which we were obliged to seek the assistance of a ferry boat to waft us and our horses. This little delay saved his brush; but he was so beaten that a man breaking stones on the road above the river, seeing him so completely exhausted, caught him, as he told us, by the "tail," when the old gentleman turned and bit him through the leg for such uncourteous treatment; and then, crossing under a gate, he reached the refuge in some rocks for which he had been running, and from which he never again sallied forth.

We could relate numerous instances of coolness and *sang-froid* exhibited by foxes when hounds were in full chase after them which would prove them to be very wide awake and calculating, not timid, animals: and as to forcing them to leave a large covert, or to pursue any course contrary to their inclinations, it will be found that eventually they succeed in their object, unless barred out from home or outpaced by hounds. We remember the reply given by the late William Codrington, who was considered a second Meynell for his wonderful knowledge of foxhound pedigrees as well as his own practical experience, to a young paceman who had expressed his opinion very loudly in his presence about the

inability of his pack to force a fox from a large wood of several hundred acres. "Force him out, sir, did you say?" rejoined the indignant master. "Force your grandmother to——&c., &c.!" There is a great deal of truth also in the doggrel lines respecting the conduct of a fox, even under pressing circumstances:—

> "If he will go, he will, you may depend on't;
> But if he won't, he won't—and there's an end on't."

By the time Will Headman reached Hazel Grove it was nearly two o'clock in the afternoon; and we all know that afternoon found foxes generally prove the stoutest runners, one cause of which is assigned to their having enjoyed a longer siesta, after perhaps a late heavy breakfast. Hazel Grove was not a covert of sufficient area to admit of a fox playing vagaries with his enemies, and Headman's rattlers soon convinced the old gentleman found therein that they were quite in earnest about either ousting or eating him. The head they held through the faggot sticks admitted of no short turnings, for they ran in a widely extended front, like a trawling net spread out for catching fishes.

"Capital scent still, Will," remarked Staveley.

"They are whirling him round a bit rather sharply, squire, as usual on first finding; but how long it will last is another matter."

"There ought to be a better scent over these rich pasture fields than across those barren downs we have just left."

"There's no 'ought' in this case, squire, begging your pardon, except the big round letter which goes

for nothing; and I always backs them barren downs, as you call them, against meadow lands, as holding a better scent any day in the week. You see, squire, scent depends more or less upon the air than upon the 'arth and I dare say you've noticed a sharp frost take more hold of things under the hill than atop of it. Hark! to Counsellor. Have at him, my lads! hoic together! hoic! They're a-sticking to him, sir, and one more round will about satisfy him. But, as I were saying, there ain't such a thing as a rule for scent; nobody can tell anything about it except by experience. Your wiseacres—book men—them as sucks other folks' brains for what they puts in print—knows all about it, in course, and talks a deal about *h*atmospherical and terrestrial influences; and yet, squire, they knows no more about what they are writing than a schoolboy beginning to spell his A B C does about grammar. But there's Jem's holloa—he's away; and we'll talk more on scent, sir, as we goes home with his brush."

A rush was instantly made by some fifty of the right sort, who still followed the hounds into the vale; but it was evident, after crossing the first large grass field, that there was but a holding scent, and not much chance of the pack getting clear, as in the morning, of the horsemen. The fences, however, proved strong enough for the veriest glutton, which went for something, and the pace good enough to keep them from riding too close, until they reached the bank of a wide and deep river intersecting the country, and at a point where no friendly bridge was perceptible.

"Lower down, gentlemen," said a cowman, in answer to a question addressed to him, "you can get over by the mill;" and without further delay, away rode forty-eight of the field. Will Headman, whose sharp eye detected a landing place on the other side, where the cows came down to drink, cried out to John Staveley, "Here, squire, follow me; if you don't mind a dip under water, I knows how to land you again;" and dash into the middle of the stream he leaped, with Jem on one side, and Staveley on the other; and after a ducking all three emerged safely, and landed on *terra firma*. Two others followed their example, when they had seen how they succeeded in battling with this formidable obstacle; but the trio were two fields ahead ere they had accomplished their in and out, not quite so cleverly as they expected.

"Egad, Will," exclaimed Staveley, whose teeth were chattering like castanets with the cold, "I don't much fancy this sort of thing; water isn't to my taste at any time."

"Not unlikely, squire, but it must be taken sometimes, and we shall soon get dry again by hard riding. Besides which, we are all right with the hounds, and the other gents are all wrong about that bridge, which lies more than a mile up stream, and the hounds are pointing t'other way, so we shall have 'em all to ourselves."

For fifty minutes the fox ran straight ahead, as if making for some large woodlands in their neighbour's country; but on crossing a large open common, on which a herd of cattle were seen

blowing and snorting, it was evident they had been following the fox, and the pack could barely hold the line through them, at a very slow pace. Headman did not consider it prudent, however, to make a swinging cast forward, in the hope of bettering his position; and well it proved that he let well alone, for on jumping the fence into a green lane near a cottage, Counsellor hit the scent off in a contrary direction.

"Headed, squire," he said, "by that man in the garden; and his dog looks as if he had been arter our fox, for the hounds don't like it, and won't speak to it, sir, although feeling they are upon it. A little patience, and we shall be right again, but he has now given up his point forward; of that there can't be much doubt."

And so it turned out. The fox now made a wide circuit over the vale, and the pace improved as the pack gained upon their game. Again the dreaded river appeared with its meandering course to resist their progress; but, fortunately, this time a bridge saved them another cold bath.

"Now I knows all about it, squire," exclaimed Headman; "he is running straight for Sandiway Park Coppice, and the earths were put to this morning; so we shall handle him yet."

Cold water tells upon a fox as well as a hot sun. By the time he had gained the wood his strength was nearly exhausted. In vain he tried every earth —all were fatally closed upon him; and whilst thus lingering, the hounds came tearing up through the underwood.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A cold bath—Beaten horses and a beaten fox—Will Headman tastes something stronger than pea soup—Jem and the miller—Two ways of letting off steam—Our huntsman's ideas about scent—The Queen's Head—Staveley and the old waiter—Lame hounds—The jog home.

When Will Headman, followed by John Staveley, reached the brow of the hill under which lay the head of earths just tried by the old fox he was pursuing, their horses were pretty much in the same condition as the wily animal, in short—to use a homely phrase, they were "used up," or done up so completely that they could not make a trot of it one yard further; and to add to their despair under such distressing circumstances, the fox did not choose to die upon the earths, but with an energy peculiar to sinking vulpines, after giving his enemies a turn round the covert, he again broke away at the lower end of it, with the eighteen couples not a hundred yards from his brush. Headman watched his last exit for a second or two with an intense scrutiny; then, jumping from his saddle, said quickly, "Squire, will you hold my horse, he can't jump another fence; but, although not so lithesome as twenty years ago, I can see the finish on foot. He's running now for those farm buildings, and he can't go beyond them."

In a trice Headman was bundling down the hill,

going at his best pace, and fully prepared to do the run out on foot if the necessity arose for so doing; but his bold resolve was nipped in the bud, greatly to his consolation, by seeing his darlings whisking their sterns about the cow-house, and hearing one or two well-known tongues baying within.

"All right," spluttered Will, as he rose up, after an unexpected surge into a cesspool, into which he had fallen when scrambling over a low wall; "we have him now to a dead certainty, although I'm pretty well stifled by that villanous cow slush. Well, it don't much signify; the pink's dyed purple, that's all—bah! I stinks like bad baccy."

"Holloa, master!" cried Jem, who just then made his appearance on foot. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing particular, Jem, only a dip into the mucksum, which aint quite so pleasant as rose-water: but here he is, behind these boardings in the cow-house, so lend a hand to pull one of 'em up."

This operation being speedily completed, the fox bolted out amongst the hounds, and was as speedily dispatched, by which time John Staveley had arrived in the farmyard leading Headman's beaten horse.

"Here he is, squire," exclaimed that individual, holding the fox over his head until he reached a clean bit of grass outside the walls; "and I think, squire, you'd like to have his brush, sticked and labelled, and hung up in your hall amongst t'other celebrated trophies of that kind; and I must say, squire, you've well deserved it."

"Be that as it may, Will, I would not have missed this brush for a five-pound note; and so now

let them have the carcase at once, for my coat seems frozen to my back, and Jem looks as if a hot glass of brandy-and-water would just save his life. Moreover, we can get some gruel at the Queen's Head for the horses, and all on our road home."

"Ah! squire, that's the ticket," said Jem, in high glee, "for I do feel much more like a moving icicle than a whipper-in; that last plunge into the river, when you and master went over the bridge, pretty nigh did for me and the poor mare. We were a longsome time under water; and when we com'd up, the current took us down stream, and I began to think we never should land, when the miller hove in sight, and beckoned me to guide her to where he was standing on the bank; and being a strong man, he laid hold on her head, and dragged her out."

"Now then, Will, quick march; give me the brush and take your horse, I shall foot it for a mile to get warm."

"And so shall I, squire, and then we can talk about scent the while."

"What's the matter with Jem, Will? he seems to have got a fit."

"Not he, squire; he only turned hisself on his back, and is kicking up his heels to let the water out of his boots."

"Ha! ha! ha! not a bad plan either; but I always have a gimlet-hole in the sole of mine, to let it run out."

"Well, squire, I guess that is something new."

"New or old, Will, 'tis an easy way of letting off the steam, when we have too much of it; and as it

has either rained or mizzled every day in the week this season, except one Sunday, my dodge answers the purpose very well."

"I shan't forget the hint, squire; but where is all the gents that set out from Hazel Grove, sworn to ride us down?"

"And that Mr. Harkaway," chimed in Jem, who had got upon his legs again; "he funked the river when we went into it, and turned away for the bridge with the rest on 'em. Well, I'd rather be drowned than that any one of that B. C. Hunt should have been up at the finish of this old fox. We have blow'd 'em all up, high and low—on down and in the vale; and I'll warrant our good old master, when we gets home, will give us a hearty welcome for beating the knowing ones so thoroughly."

"Now, sir," said Headman, as they tramped along on foot towards the Queen's Head, "I suppose you didn't expect a scent in such weather as this, with the mist freezing on our coats as it falls, and the wind in the east; but then you see, squire, there's no rule for it, as I said this morning, notwithstanding all the philosophers tell us about it. It were better, though, on the downs than it is in the vale, where generally the land is of a colder nature, and for choice I'll back the lighter soils against the heavy ones; but there the *h*air, squire, has more to do with scent than the 'arth."

"That's true enough, Will, for I remember seeing a capital scent with spaniels when out shooting last year, during the hardest frost I ever remember. The wind was due east, as it is now, and the cold most

intense; and yet, notwithstanding, our little cry of spaniels and terriers, kept knocking about the hares and rabbits at a wonderful rate, the greater part of the day; and as for the ground, it was as hard as a board, and not a blade of grass in the high wood, where the scent was the best. This sets at nought all the old established crotchets about a southerly wind and a cloudy sky, with their balmy breezes, as indispensable to a good scenting day. Experience teaches us that the enigma of scent lies as deep in the well as truth is said to be."

"Well, squire, I'm quite of your opinion, and still thinks it's all in the *h*air; contrariwise, how could our hounds twice this arternoon have owned the scent across that 'ere river? The water the fox touched in crossing were gone a long way down the stream before they reached the bank; and in course, if the water held the scent, they would have gone down arter it, instead of swimming straight across it. The fact is, squire, the water didn't hold the scent at all, no more than the land does sometimes, 'twere wafted over it by the *h*air, or *h*atmosphere, as some learned folks call it, and the hounds felt it was before them. Well, now, here's a case in point; there's that chap before us walking along the road, and smoking his pipe; his whiff don't touch land or water, and yet I could run him for miles, as long as his baccy lasted—leastways Jem could, and run into him, for he's a deal lighter on foot than I. Then, squire, I remember seeing, once in my life, a lot of staghounds, as they're called—and a pretty lot it was—break away from huntsman and whip, and run the

deer cart like blazes, although the poor brute shut up in it, had not put his hoof yet on the ground, so that couldn't be called a pad scent any ways—'twere all in the *h*air, squire."

"Well, so it is generally, Will; but the air is uncommonly cold just now, and thank goodness we are at the Queen's Head, where we shall get some hot brandy-and-water."

"And I'll warrant, squire, arter we have drunk it folk might run us for a mile or two when we get into our saddles."

"Well, what's to be done with the horses, they are worst off?"

"We'll put 'em into the stable for a minute or two, out of this biting wind, whilst we gets some hot gruel for 'em and a mouthful of hay."

"Corn, I suppose you mean?"

"No, squire, they could'nt eat it; and if they would gruel is the thing first, with a noggin of gin in it to warm 'em, then a morsel of hay, and we must be on their backs again. It won't do to let 'em stop too long, or they'll get stiff; and here's a large loose box with plenty of straw where we will put the hounds for the ten minutes we can stay."

Whilst Headman and Jem, with the ostler, were arranging for the comfort of their horses, John Staveley entered the house, ordering cold meat with the brandy-and-water for three, to be placed on the table in the traveller's room, where blazed a roaring fire, before which he stood with his back to the grate.

"Now, waiter, that will do; we havn't much time

to spare, so call the huntsman and whipper-in to come here directly."

"Yes, sir; but master, seeing you looked cold, has had some good gravy soup got ready."

"All the better, bring it in."

Exit waiter; enter head ditto, with a tureen of hot stuff called ox-tail—a misnomer generally, as ox-tails are not so easily got hold of as sheep's tails in the provinces.

"Well, Thomas," exclaimed Staveley, "I was afraid to ask questions, not seeing you as usual, and began to think this cold weather had shrivelled you up like a daisy at sunset."

"I was engaged, squire, taking up dinner to some gents in the commercial line when you rode up; and you know they always wants the best of things at a moment's notice, and the lowest rate."

"And how does the house go on, Thomas?"

"'Tain't burnt down yet, sir, but 'twill soon by these fire engines. They have got the rail open to within ten miles of us, and when they builds up the station-house at Lenton Hill, 'tis all over with our house. We shan't ever do any business except with tourists and trappists, and they won't pay the coal bill."

"What do you call trappists?"

"'Tis another name for bagmen—in politer language, commercial—we can't tack on 'gentlemen,' sir, without doing violence to our sense of truth."

"Here, Jem," cried Staveley, "off with that red rag of yours. Take it in the kitchen, Thomas, and bring your master's dressing gown or your missus's flannel

petticoat to throw over his shoulders. Now, Jem, down with this first," pouring him out half a tumbler of brandy-and-water, "and then go into the basin of soup. Egad, Will, I think we had better put him in between the blankets at once, and do him up here for the night."

"I shall be all right again presently, thank ye, squire; but I do feel very much like a dog in a wet sack."

Horses and hounds, after a hard day, such as we have been relating, are far better jogging quietly on their way home, than standing or lying in a stable, however comfortable, at a way-side inn, for more than a few minutes, the former for a little warm water or gruel to resuscitate their exhausted frames, but as to the latter, it is very seldom that any refreshment can be procured for them. Whilst moving, hounds which have been strained or injured by blows or blackthorns do not appear to feel these effects; but when their limbs begin to stiffen by lying down, they turn out quite lame. Will Headman, knowing this certain consequence, hastily swallowed his soup and brandy-and-water, with a small proportion of bread and meat, and pocketing the remainder of the loaf for his pets, said, "Now, squire, I'm ready; but you can enjoy your meal comfortably, and overtake me on the road."

"No, Will, I don't want to spoil my dinner; so get out the hounds while I pay the bill—I shall be ready, too, in five minutes."

"Some of them go rather tenderly," remarked Staveley, on resuming their tramp upon that road.

"Yes, squire, and there will be more going tenderly to-morrow morning; but that can't be helped after such work as they have gone through this day. And now to resume our discourse about scent; you seemed dubious about it's being in the *h*air?"

"Not always, Will."

"Generally—that's my rule, if there's any rule. My meaning is, that scent always does depend more upon the *h*atmosphere, than upon the state of the ground. Now you noticed, I dare say, this arternoon, that the hounds were running hard up one side of the hedge, over Buttermere farm, when the fox had gone up the other side; yet, now I suppose you will admit, that was not a ground scent, inasmuch as the fox never touched the 'arth where the hounds were running what is called breast high, that is, when the scent is wafted over their heads. I don't mean to deny, squire, altogether, that the ground has nothing whatever to do with it, no matter what sort of soil you are running over, provided there is something to catch and hold the 'fluvia oozing out of the animal's body and his breath; and there was a proof of it, when we got upon Starveall Common, the poorest bit of ground in the country, but covered with coarse grass and patches of heather—didn't they fly over it! faster than across the rich grazing lands of farmer Grainger."

"Well, Will, I admit this, but the air has little to do with it on a bad scenting day, when hounds are obliged to pick out the line foot by foot."

"Very true, squire, that's what we call a pad scent, left upon the 'arth chiefly by the fox's foot;

and when hounds are holding the line over greasy or sticky fallows there is less scent, from the soil clinging to the ball of the foot. Then so much depends upon the pace at which the fox is travelling. The faster he goes the better the scent; and the reason is plain enough—the 'fluvia from his body being thrown off in a much higher degree when in motion. We often draw over foxes lying snug in their kennels; and every spooney who knows anything about varmints can tell ye that a ferret or a fitch whilst asleep throws off no scent from his body; but stir him up with a pole or a terrier dog, and don't he smell a few, squire? This very morning, the second fox we killed was found by me, not the hounds, which passed him, curled up under a fir tree fast asleep, and I gave him a cut of my whip to rouse him up. So you see, with all the burning scent he left behind him when bundled out, not a hound winded him in his kennel, when the *h*air around him was not impregnated with the 'fluvia from his body. Then you see the scent changes as the fox grows weaker after a long run; and when he is quite exhausted, there is scarcely any at all: and you know, Squire, one of our greatest difficulties is, when running a beaten fox into a covert where there is another, to prevent the hounds flashing away upon the fresh one, the scent of which is so much better than that of the hunted one. Now, if hounds had the sense to know this, they would stick to their own game, which is nearly knocked up, and not run after the fresh fox, which will lead them many miles before he can be brought into the same

condition. In course, all hounds enjoy a scent, that's natural; but I rather think they like catching their game quite as well as hunting it."

"Yes, Will, that's true enough; changing scents is the greatest of all our drawbacks."

"It is so, squire; we must put up with the weather, chop and change as it may, like other folk; but to have hounds holloa'd on to a fresh fox when they are just on the point of catching the tired one, after a hard chase, is what I calls a very hard case."

"There will be a harder case to-morrow, I think—a precious hard frost, and no hunting at all for a month, perhaps."

"A fortnight's shut-up wouldn't do us any harm, squire, as we have had a pretty good share of work this season, and that's about the lion's share in comparison with our neighbours. But, talking of frost, I dare say you have seen a capital scent in a white one, whilst it was white, but just the reverse or none at all when it were going off, and the vapour like rising from the 'arth. Well, putting this and that together, and all things considered, scent is, after all that can be said about it, a very ticklish subject to handle, like a live fox; still I pins my faith upon the *h*air."

"Right, quite right, Will, it does all come from the *h*air: here our roads cross, so good night."

CHAPTER XLV.

Foxhunting fixtures—Various motives for meeting hounds—Change of line in drawing coverts—Good foxes on the look out for squalls—Witches and wizards—The poultry fancier—Scarcity of good bipeds as well as quadrupeds—Counting noses—Keeping your appointments—Hunting a cure for *atra cura*—Advertising fixtures now imperative—Ludicrous scene in the field—An explosion—The flight of Anak.

Every pleasure in life has its alloy; but of all field sports, we believe foxhunting to be the most enjoyable. The ride or drive to the place of meeting on a hunting morning cheers and exhilarates one; the expectation of meeting friends and neighbours; the anticipation of good sport; the scene of hounds and horses grouped together at some favourite fixture; all these afford food for enjoyment to the genuine lover of the sport. It is not our purpose to inquire into the various motives by which one half, perhaps, of the assembled horsemen are actuated; but it would be contrary to our experience to say that all men go out hunting for the sake of hunting. By condescending to patronise the sport, however, they are doing good service to the cause, and we welcome their appearance at the place of meeting with pleasure. Foxhunting happens in these days to be the fashion; and, as the lady once said, "We may as well be out of the world as out of the fashion."

The place of meeting never ought to be at or

even near the side of the covert to be first drawn. Moreover, masters of experience know full well the necessity of keeping their own counsel, or, in other words, sealing their lips, as to their line of march from a given fixture. If a certain covert is generally drawn from a certain place, many will not go to that place at all if lying out of their road from home, but content themselves with loitering at the wood hedge, instead of riding a mile further to the advertised fixture; yet, whilst approving their prudence in saving their horses' legs, we are reluctantly compelled to disappoint the expectations of the few in order to ensure, as much as in our power lies, the sport of the majority. If the same covert is invariably drawn from the same place of meeting, that covert will be besieged by a host of foot-men as well as horsemen, long before the arrival of the hounds; and if there is a good fox in it, he will make sure to be out of it on the first intimation of danger. A good old fox is rarely caught napping, and as rarely waits to be found by hounds. We do hear occasionally of a straight running one being thus found; but it is generally in a strange country or in the spring of the year, when dog-foxes are unusually indolent and sleepy during the day, from travelling many miles over night. But a knowing old wily, upon his own ground, when finding his door shut, is always on the *qui vive* for squalls; and the tramp of horses or talking of pedestrians around the wood are sufficient hints to make himself scarce as soon as possible.

We have often known foxes to leave the strongest

coverts in which the earths had been stopped at night—perceiving, of course, what this barring of doors portended—and to lie out in hedgerows, even in the stubble and turnip fields, until the hounds had been drawn away from the wood, and then, when the whole cavalcade had passed out of sight and hearing, quietly emerge from their hiding-places, and sneak back into covert. This stratagem is continually adopted by crafty old foxes, and the huntsman is often blamed for not drawing the wood sufficiently—in short, leaving foxes behind him, which, in reality, were not there when the hounds were. The fact is, that foxes are not credited with half the wiliness and sagacity they possess; and although we have often heard hares called witches, the term wizard is rarely applied to any of the vulpine race.

By instinct the hare has recourse to many devices when her strength and speed fail to elude the pursuit of her enemies; her leaps and doubles in retrograde movements, even to the last, being truly surprising. Occasionally, when hardly pressed by hounds, hares will take refuge in drains or rabbit-holes, and if not ejected from them will resort to the same shelter again to save their lives; but, as a general rule, their chief dependence is upon stratagem, to mislead their pursuers; and this constitutes the great distinction between the chase of the fox and the more timid animal. A fox runs straight, if permitted so to do, for a given point—a head of earths or drain—which he regards as his home; and if barred out from them goes still further on for

other such places with which he is acquainted. That is generally the course pursued by what we call hard-running foxes; and it is marvellous what an extent of country they travel over in their nightly peregrinations at a particular season of the year. There can be no question that both foxes and hares do not exhibit such stoutness in running as in former days, and the cause is obvious: they are generally too numerous and too well fed at home to be under the necessity of travelling very far for companionship or food. All experienced sportsmen know—although reluctant to admit the fact, for fear of the numbers being diminished by unfair means—that for hunting, game should be rather scanty to afford good sport.

The great drawback to foxhunting is the changing of foxes (crossing the line of a fresh one), when save for this misadventure the run would have been complete. There are what we call ringing foxes as well as the straight-running. The former, however, are generally vixens, and therefore their lives ought to be spared. But when a dog-fox is detected in such shortgoings, a couple of hours are well spent in securing his scalp; for having once beaten hounds at such tricks, he will never improve upon further acquaintance. Kill this sort of animal by all manner of means—fair or foul. Mob him, hustle and holloa him to death as soon as possible if you can; and we forgive you taking every advantage of this mar-sport, short of spoiling your hounds in your effort to obtain his *spolia opima*, since he generally brings discredit upon his family by

prowling about farmyards at night—unless rabbits are very plentiful in his locality—and robbing the henroosts; and when found by hounds has recourse to dodging tricks, and rings round covert to foil them.

It is related of a famous old Dorsetshire fox, which had beaten Mr. Farquarson's hounds for several seasons, and had obtained the *sobriquet* of Buttermere Jack, from being generally found in a large covert of that name, that on hearing the tramp of a horse near the wood, or the slamming of a gate, he was off immediately, gaining thereby such an advantage that the hounds could never overtake him. One fox of this character is worth a score of those so easily brought to book, after your twenty or thirty minutes' burst. Ah! that book-keeping or nose-counting account is just the very thing to mar sport. The thirty brace of cubs disposed of somehow or other before the 1st of November would appear to argue that the pack which could accomplish such a feat must be, as good spirits are said to be, "above proof;" whereas ten couples of harriers would as easily perform the same act.

It is universally admitted that good people are scarce—much more scarce, considering the increase of population, than they ever have been since the days of Noah—so are good foxes. The good ones are rarely to be met with, the bad are continually in our way when not wanted. In Beckford's time it was not the fashion generally to advertise the places at which foxhounds were to meet; and there can be no doubt that such a reservation on the part of the master proved beneficial to hounds, although

unsatisfactory and exceedingly disgusting to the foxhunting community. Every genuine sportsman will allow that there are days, and many throughout the season, when hounds would be far better lying upon their benches in the lodging-house at home than disturbing coverts from which no sport could reasonably be expected. Moreover, the hunting fixture in his time was not attended, as now, by a large concourse of men on horseback, who had sent on their hunters many miles by road or railway to be present at the gathering, and had set apart that day for recreation from business, or from a real love of hunting; so to either of these, although from different causes, the non-appearance of the hounds could not fail to produce great disappointment, and something more. To be told by a whipper-in, with the master's compliments, "that the hounds would be there next morning if favourable," seemed only adding insult to injury.

Men who have nothing to do at home, and others so exceedingly fond of hunting that nothing could keep them at home, when there is a chance of meeting hounds, will go out in every kind of weather in the hope of finding, if not a fox, a cure for that *atra cura quæ sedit post equitem*, to kill time—save the mark!—which, to those who know not rightly its value, passes heavily and slowly along, like the car of Juggernaut, crushing numbers by its weight; yet to others, who count the minutes as they fly as the most precious moments of their lives which they can only call their own, every hour to them has its allotted work.

The vast increase of hunting men in these later days, has, however, rendered the publication of hunting fixtures imperative; and although many large landed proprietors are not foxhunters, more than half their friends and acquaintances are lovers of the chase, and to gratify them parties are made overnight, when the foxhounds are advertised to meet at or near their country seats. An additional impulse has also been given to this popular sport by the patronage of the fair sex. A man may prove sulky and surly to his brother man, where his pursuits differ, who is not proof against the winning smile of woman when pleading the cause of "The Noble Science." The tillers of the soil may be called the only class of men who really do suffer from this sport having become so fashionable; but, putting aside the love of it inherent in the hearts of all true Britons or half Britons, the increase of hunting studs in every locality must and does increase the value of their hay and corn to a great amount, and consequently compensate for any injury done to their crops when in a growing state. Occasionally we do meet with a sulky farmer, who threatens to pitchfork some of the field if he can catch them; and we will relate a little *émeute* of this kind which occurred lately in the hunting-field.

The hounds had come to a check on the land of a big burly agriculturist, who assailed one of the hunt with very uncourteous language, threatening him with condign punishment on the spot for thus trespassing. The assailed, in no wise disconcerted at this furious attack, quietly took out a cigar, and

lighting it from his matchbox, replaced the latter in his coat pocket, on which he unfortunately bumped down in the saddle; and being a bulky man, the sudden and heavy pressure caused the whole to explode with a sharp crack, resembling that portending the advent of a thunderstorm. There being no fire-engine nearer at hand than that belonging to the parish three miles off, and being unprovided with Mr. Benham's *Extincteur* (which every smoker ought to carry on his back, in case of a similar accident), our hunting friend sprang from his saddle instanter, tearing off his coat with wild and frantic gestures—and well was he justified in doing so, upon finding such a cracker attached to his tail. We presume many of our readers may have seen or heard of unfortunate dogs placed in this uncomfortable dilemma by mischievous urchins. The agricultural Anak cast but one look at this fire-eater springing from his horse, not a long lingering look behind, but believing his adversary's intentions to be, from tearing off his coat so hastily, to challenge him there and then to a game of fives, Anak fled incontinently and ignominiously from his own field; neither slackened he his speed until he had reached his homestead, some half-a-mile distant, wherein he bolted and barred himself from the anticipated onslaught; and we need scarcely remark the exceeding merriment it caused to the whole field.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Winter rural sports—Foxhunting and pheasant shooting - The battue - Commander-in-chief—Non-interference—Experienced sportsmen of service sometimes—General conduct of the field - Rivalry in horsemanship—Hunting to ride—Spoiling sport - Heads and tails up.

In the present enlightened age the time of meeting together for the purpose of finding a fox is about one hour before noon, when our forefathers generally returned home for their early dinner, having mounted their horses at cock-crowing, *i.e.*, by the earliest dawn of light, and long before Aurora had risen from her bed in the east. Beckford's opinion on harehunting was, that "if you make a serious business of it, you spoil it." Young England appears to entertain a similar opinion in regard to foxhunting. We have become very luxurious in the nineteenth century; we don't like to be put out of our way, or, in other words, subjected to the least inconvenience or trouble when it can be avoided; and therefore, in obedience to their requirements, eleven o'clock has become the fashionable hour, allowing plenty of time to make a good breakfast, glance over our letters, and take a hasty run through the newspaper, before having a run through the country.

The heaviest time during the winter season is the forenoon, when there is little to be done in the way

of recreation and amusement by those happy mortals who have literally nothing to do, except, perhaps, scribbling over two or three sheets of note paper to very particular friends; and were not foxhunting the fashion, what would become of them? On non-hunting days time may be saved from *ennui* by a lounge down to the stables after breakfast, smoking a cigar whilst looking over the horses, and kicking your heels against the corn-bin whilst watching the operation called dressing. A battue day possibly may sometimes intervene to drown dull care; but the most thickly stocked preserves cannot afford sport—shooting we ought to have said—for three days a week throughout the season, like a moderately stocked foxhunting country. A battue day is a grand meet for gods and goddesses; but, like real angels' visits, they are few and far between. Battueing would lose its chief, and we may add only, attraction were less than a thousand head of game slaughtered in one day; and where are the preserves which could afford such blood-shedding three days a week, from the 1st of October to the 1st day of February? More money would be required to maintain the staff of keepers, watchers, &c., for such an establishment than that for the support of six packs of foxhounds on a moderate scale. Although little can be said against foxhunters, they get pretty well bespattered with foul language as well as with mud in foul weather; yet selfishness and vain boasting cannot very fairly be laid to their charge. A master may feel rather pleased on seeing a good run afforded by his pack noticed in sporting prints,

and he has good cause to be proud of such an achievement, which has cost much labour and scientific knowledge in bringing to a fortunate termination. *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*

Foxhunting may be said to combine the *utile* and *dulce*, by imparting health to the body as well as recreation and pleasure to the mind. Wild-shooting, in contradistinction to battueing, where a man must take plenty of walking exercise to fill his bag, is both useful and agreeable, and the shooter can boast of pursuing his game to more advantage than foxhunters. Upon such matters of taste, however, we are not disposed to split straws. Some men prefer walking to riding; the latter is our choice, from being more exhilarating, and attended with less fatigue of body, which always tells upon the spirit.

With foxhunting, non-intervention on the part of the field has been considered a necessary and general rule to lay down, the propriety of which is obvious; as "too many cooks spoil the broth," too many amateur assistants are certain to spoil the sport. There are some men who really take an interest in all the proceedings, from the find to the finish; but they are *raræ aves* in these days, when riding occupies the minds of ninety-nine out of the hundred, and so little attention is bestowed upon the work of hounds: still, where such men are to be found, masters hail their appearance at the place of meeting with sincere pleasure, regarding them as brother labourers in the same field, upon whose co-operation in critical cases they may depend; and there

are many opportunities when experienced sportsmen can lend a helping hand in case the whipper-in may be absent from his post.

Whilst drawing coverts, the head whipper-in cannot be here, there, and everywhere at the same moment, although, perhaps, expected to do such ubiquitous duty: and here a sensible amateur who knows "who's who" in the pack—*videlicit*, has made himself acquainted with the hounds and their various dispositions—may be of great service to the master, and contribute greatly to the sport of his fellow foxhunters, by a judicious use of his voice and whip in several ways. When the body of the pack has settled to one fox he may cut off stragglers breaking away after another. If young hounds are running riot, of which he has ocular proof, a rate and a crack of the whip at the right moment are of signal service to the master and huntsman. We are, of course, supposing the amateur who can do these things to be a proficient in the science, otherwise he may do more mischief than good. When a few couples get ahead of the pack, he may have an opportunity of stopping them, *absenti* whipper-in. At a check on a fallow field, nothing more likely than for a "timid" to start up from her form and scuttle away, with Foreman and Fleecer, straining every muscle to catch her. A cut over them, with a deep guttural note, will prevent others following their bad example. But hallooing and screaming is quite a different affair to rating, producing the contrary effect, and creating immense confusion. An amateur assistant, however zealously affected towards the orderly

conduct of the pack to which he has attached himself, unless possessing strong vocal powers, had better not attempt a rate, but content himself with the use of the whipcord. Riding and hallooing after young hounds in pursuit of a hare with a shrill voice is more often taken by them for a cheer than a rate, encouraging others to join in the outbreak.

Upon such an emergency, a sensible huntsman will instantly turn his horse's head, calling his hounds back or in a contrary direction, leaving the delinquents to the tender mercies of Jack, who will give them a thorough good scoring before they can take refuge in the pack, where, of course, they ought to feel quite secure from further punishment. We know of no better plan to break young hounds from running hare than this; and after one lesson of this kind, it is not likely that they will run the gauntlet again, especially if both Jem and Jack can be spared to give them a thorough good lashing before they can reach their huntsman. We have found the most wilful rioters cured by this process, when all others have failed. Where hares abound, hounds are accustomed to see them continually getting up before them, and become indifferent; but where they are scarce the reverse is the case. We remember a clever huntsman in the New Forest—at that time full of deer—who used to trot his young hounds along the drive across which they were continually passing; and if any of the entry broke away he turned his horse round quickly, trotting off in another direction and blowing his horn, whilst the whippers-in were punishing the offenders and driving

them back at full speed to their huntsman; and those which had been thus scarified and horrified by whip and voice never would look at a deer again.

The late John Ward, when hunting the Craven country, had a tame deer, which used to walk out with the hounds into a paddock near the kennels, and fed with them out of the troughs containing oatmeal and boiled flesh. We all know that prevention is better than cure; and this is more particularly the case with young foxhounds, which are very difficult to cure of bad habits, when they have once tasted the blood of deer or hare. The *noli me tangere* must be rigidly enforced; and although "cats may be permitted with impunity to look at kings and queens," young puppy dogs must not cast longing glances towards their forbidden fruit without caution. A whipper-in ought to be a first *rater* with his tongue as well as his hand. We don't care the least about a melodious voice, for, although agreeable to the ear, it is of little service in wood or field, and the possessor of it generally indulges this faculty rather too freely. We prefer the *vox objurgans* to the *vox suavis et canora* in a whipper-in.

The mischief arising from an unruly pack of hounds is great, but that from an unruly field of sporting men far greater. We have ever considered the position of a subscription master anything but enviable. Those who pay their twenty-fives, or even tens, always think themselves entitled to have a hand in the game, or, rather, a voice in the vote; they have a right to holloa whenever so disposed,

to ride over hounds if in their way, and to commit sundry other enormities as it pleases them; and if reproved, tender their resignations as supporters of the hunt. This conduct is, to say the least of it, evidence of very bad taste, as well as of utter disregard to the conventionalities of society. The most furious of radicals are represented by a delegate, whom they not only pay for his services, but feel bound also to submit to his decision; and when a master has been selected by the unanimous concurrence of the hunt, every subscriber ought to know that he is the recognised commander-in-chief pending his tenure of office, whether of long or short duration. As with nations so with fox-hunting countries; there must be one to whom the reins of government are entrusted; there must be a head and neck to guide the body and control the limbs.

Compliance with certain established rules is expected of the "field," both to afford the huntsman and hounds room for exercising their several abilities without let or hindrance, as well as to ensure their own sport. When gorse or spinny is being drawn, the "field" are expected to leave that side open and quite free from trespassers, where the fox may be likely to break for a good line of country; and until he is gone clear away, no holloa should escape the lips of those who may have caught sight of him, since nothing will head back a fox more certainly than a premature signal of this kind. Should the gorse be small, silence ought to be observed by all the lookers-on. Talking and coffee-housing is

permitted at the place of meeting; but these should cease and cigars be thrown away as soon as the pack is thrown into the covert. It is also expected of the "field" that they allow the hounds to go first and settle down upon the scent before they take up the running or riding. This is a very difficult rule to be enforced by the master when all are so nervously impatient to be off and away.

Rivalry in horsemanship is the great evil in the hunting-field. Harry Hasty does not relish the idea of being cut down by Tom Harkaway; he is on the look-out to take the lead of him, and *malgré* entreaties or remonstrances from master or huntsman, goes away at racing pace with the leading couples. What concerns him is only how to get a good start and keep it. What are hounds to him? He rides after them, it is true, because the recognized fashion is to do so; but he is evidently intent upon using this kind of riding to hounds—or, more generally, riding over them, unless the pace is good—for a means to an end. A steeplechase would be infinitely more to his taste. Probably, most probably, the horse he is riding has to undergo this ordeal at the close of the hunting season. Poor brute! merciless man! *n'importe*. Harry Hasty has a point to gain in the betting; as for hounds, they ought to take care of themselves, and get out of his way. Now what is a master of hounds or his huntsman to do with such hurry-scurry fellows as these? They cannot be caught, perhaps, till the mischief has been done; and by that time, in the game of "follow my leader," a score more will be in the same catalogue of first-

class offenders; the hounds, heads up, in ten or twelve minutes; and no scent forward.

To tell such men—sportsmen of course they are not—that by their own conduct a good run has been spoilt, will be mere waste of so many words. They have no idea of sport; it has never entered into their imaginations to conceive what sport might mean. They have gone out hunting for their gallop, have had it; and Harry thinks his nag has the foot of Tom's, and can negotiate—that's the cant term—his fences in better style. That's all he cared about knowing; and as for the master's "damson juice," he don't care a rap about it. He has broken old Saracen's leg; but masters of hounds don't bring actions for damages of this kind.

CHAPTER XLVII.

"But if the rougher sex by this fierce sport
Is hurried wild, let not such horrid joy
E'er stain the bosom of the British fair.
Far be the spirit of the chase from them!
Uncomely courage, unbeseeming skill,
To spring the fence, to run the prancing steed:
The cap, the whip, the masculine attire,
In which they roughen to the sense; and all
The winning softness of their sex is lost."

A clear stage—Clearing a pack and five-barred gate—Pressing hounds—Thoroughbred hunters no novelty—Short and bang tails—Ladies in the hunting-field.

At present we are treating of the duties which the "field" owe to the master and his hounds; hereafter we may discuss the forbearance they ought to exhibit towards each other. We lay this down as a rule absolute, recognised by every true sportsman, that no man is justified in riding so close upon the line of the pack as to interfere with their just prerogative of doing their proper business in a proper way. If a man cannot ride to hounds without riding after them—that is, in their wake—he is bound to give the last hounds both time and space to clear every fence before he puts his horse at it. Nervous riders are always in an absurd fuss about this very thing, and why? Hounds don't run now, if they ever did, in a long extended line of half a mile, when it might be imagined that the leading couples would

kill and eat their fox before the rear-guard got up, supposing all had an equal start. But the fact is, that although not quite so closely huddled together whilst running, as recorded in the "Memoirs of another Tom Smith," that a man on horseback could clear the whole lot and a five-barred gate at one swoop! foxhounds generally pack tolerably well in chase; and he who takes the tail hound for his pioneer has no cause to be nervous about being thrown out—only let him beware never to ride too closely upon him, to prevent him keeping his place.

A great deal of trash has been written and said about riding alongside of the leading couples, where no one has a right to be—no, not even their huntsman—*cui bono?* If a man has eyes in his head he ought to be able to see, without being in such forbidden and dangerous proximity, whether they have a scent before them or not. Twenty or thirty yards to their right hand or left is sufficiently near, allowing them space to turn on a sudden check and make their own cast, without being ridden over in their eagerness to recover the line. Hounds are rarely ridden over by experienced sportsmen, the mischief being done by steeplechasers—jealous and nervous horsemen—solely occupied with their own thoughts and the performances of their horses, without considering any further. Such continue pressing and poking on, fearful of losing place, and to them a sudden throw up at head is an intolerable disaster; it lets other fellows in who happened to be out of the start, placing them on an equality with themselves; and on that account only they are so impa-

tient of delay. It does not appear to enter into their calculation that a short respite from excessive respiration may prove of great service to their horses, which ought to be standing still or moving slowly about, while the rear-guard are in distress from making up lost ground. Upon these occasions a pull-up for a few seconds or minutes is tantamount to a couple of miles gained in the run; it gives your horse time to recover his wind; and after that, if worth his keep, he will keep his place to the end of it.

Not very long ago—within the last year—we noticed in print an assertion, that men ride better now than their forefathers ever did before them. That more men hunt now—or rather, go out riding with hounds, which are not exactly synonymous terms—we readily admit; but that men ride better, with more judgment and discretion, maintaining firmer seats in the saddle, than fifty years ago, we utterly and entirely repudiate; for of the two or three hundred who meet together in the grass shires, there are not more than twenty or thirty who see the end of a good run, the remainder being told off generally in the first four miles when the pace is severe. If the majority of the field ride so much better now, how does it happen they are so easily displaced? We have been told that hounds are much faster. The same assertion has been made with regard to hunters; therefore they must be on equal footing as to speed.

Young England entertains the idea that nobody ever rode a thoroughbred horse in the hunting-

field prior to the advent of the present century, simply because, we suppose, hunters of the past have been pourtrayed in print with short tails instead of long. This is a great mistake, good riders to hounds in all previous days since foxhunting has been in existence having shown a preference for thoroughbred ones, although from prudential motives curtailing an excessive longitude of horsehair. Bang tails are the fashion now—short tails in bygone times. Crinolines are also the fashion with women—perhaps we ought to say, have been till very recently—trains now. Well, we won't cavil about trifles: but will any young Englander have the face to tell us that women were not as fair, as estimable, as amiable and equally well bred, if not with better blood flowing in their veins, than those now flaunting in public with their flowing dresses, for which a page is requisite to uphold?

To confess our true opinion, we don't think the hunting-field quite the arena upon which women can exhibit themselves to so great advantage as in the drawing-room. Men admire the fair sex mainly because they possess those characteristics not common to themselves; and, on the other hand, women generally love our sex because we possess qualifications the very antipodes to their own. A pretty face, with a graceful figure, in female costume, on horseback, is a very charming sight; but we had rather behold it in Rotten Row than in the hunting-field. There cannot be any more health-giving invigorating exercise. What is lolling idly on the soft cushions of a carriage compared to a seat in the

saddle? Little air and less exercise can be expected from the former; whereas nothing can be more delightful than a brisk canter over downs, or through green lanes, on a fine balmy spring morning. In these days, also, of crinolines and wide-flowing dresses, it is quite reviving to see a good figure in a riding habit, which sets off the form to the greatest advantage.

Out of the large number of ladies, however, who ride to meet or follow hounds, there are very few Dianas who really enjoy the sport, and can take a line of their own across country. When a man falls at a fence his misadventure excites little or no compassion from his brothers in pink—more often a laugh; but when a woman comes to grief there is no gentleman in the field who would not give up his place to render her every assistance in his power. Such acts of gallantry and attention show the feelings of a true sportsman, as well as of a well-bred man. We confess our anxiety on their account when seeing them in full chase, riding at fences which many men would decline, and with a spirit characteristic of their sex; for the minds of these gentle creatures, when aroused to acts of daring and activity, are not only on an equality, but often surpass the most courageous of the sterner sex.

It has been remarked over and over again that horses, however fractious with men, become suddenly quiet and tractable when handled by women—one cause of which may be attributed to their holding the reins as if with a silken thread, and the other their more gentle treatment; the *suaviter in modo*

is, as regards equestrianism, more efficacious than the *fortiter in re,* since a good horse never requires whip or spur, and women especially never ought to be placed upon the backs of any save made hunters. Young adventurous riders may take pleasure in teaching a four-year-old how to cross country; the pleasure is enhanced by finding oneself on a quick and ready pupil; and if brought to the finish after a good run, the pilot has good cause to feel proud of their joint success, although attended perhaps with a few overturns.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The author's visit to a game preserver with a friend—Hospitable reception—Mr. Fortescue's advocacy of "The Noble Science" in a social point of view—Hunting wild animals natural to man—The time of year when foxes may purloin pheasants, which, even then, have a peculiar protection—Rabbits their favourite game.

MANY years ago, when commencing the unthankful task of forming a foxhunting country in a district which had at a remote period been visited by a pack of foxhounds—but which, like angels' visits, had been few and far between; so rare, indeed, that a price had been set on the heads of the vulpine race, and paid by the churchwardens of some parishes—we called upon a large game preserver to solicit the favour of his preserving foxes for our hunt.

"Preserve foxes!" he exclaimed, in perfect amazement at the apparent impertinence of our request; "I preserve hares and pheasants for my own and my friends' amusement. What on earth induced you to ask me to make my coverts a preserve for foxes?"

"That you might increase the number of your friends fiftyfold. But the term preserve, is perhaps rather too strong; our meaning is, that if you will protect the foxes which may enter your coverts from being trapped by your keepers, you will confer a

very great and lasting favour upon a great many of your neighbours, who prefer hunting to shooting."

"But this is not a foxhunting country; it is too hilly, and the woods are considered too large for the purpose. In short, since my possession of this property foxhounds have never drawn one of my coverts; and, therefore, as a matter of course, I have treated foxes as other vermin, and they have been trapped accordingly."

"Well, sir, we admit that hitherto, no hounds having ever drawn your coverts since your succession to the property, you were perfectly justified in killing foxes; but as to the unfitness of this country for foxhunting, by reason of its hilly nature just in this immediate vicinity, and the extent of its woods, we must observe that the hills you speak of are mere molehills to the mountains we have seen in many provincial foxhunting countries; and as to the woods, they are the most insignificant spinnies in comparison with those in Hants, Berks, and Wilts. Why, sir, my friend Fortescue, of Langley Hall, on the borders of Wilts, who accompanied me this afternoon, declared that every acre of wood he had seen within our six-mile ride would not amount in acreage to half of one of the coverts in his hunt."

"Where is Mr. Fortescue?" he inquired. "His father was a particular friend of mine."

"Holding our horses in the stable-yard."

"Oh! that must not be. Pray have your horses put into the stable. I should like very much to see Mr. Fortescue."

Returning with our friend, who was received

most graciously, and many inquiries made about his father, we sat some time talking upon indifferent subjects, and, when taking leave, the great game preserver asked us to stay and dine with him. "Being a bachelor," he said, "I will dispense with your dressing for dinner; and foxhunters are not disposed to be particular as to the viands set before them."

Having no engagement, and it being then the month of July, we accepted with pleasure the invitation; and our host, upon so short a preparation, produced an entertainment which none can furnish better than bachelors' cooks; and we certainly did ample justice to his champagne, for which the heat of the weather was pleaded as an excuse. After dinner, claret and burgundy took precedence over our port and sherry; and although our host, from ill-health, drank only a weak solution of brandy-and-water, he was pleased to see his guests so well satisfied with the productions of his cellar. Our friend Fortescue being both witty and clever, with an abundant store of odd stories and anecdotes, contributed most pleasantly to the hilarity of the entertainment, and our host, feeling in high good humour, said with jocularity—

"So, Fortescue, you came over with your friend, it seems, to storm my castle and preserves, by the assault, I suppose, of your agreeable conversation?"

"Not exactly so, sir, since I did not calculate upon being admitted at all into your presence; but as you conferred that honour upon me, and received us with such unbounded hospitality and kindness,

my lips are sealed as to our mutual object; but thus much I may say, without intending to say more, I am a foxhunter by choice—you are a game-preserver; yet, like my friend, you are also a master of hounds."

"A master of hounds, Fortescue?"

"Yes, sir. You are master of the choicest kennel of greyhounds I have seen; and my friend H—— is a master of foxhounds. Yours run by sight—his by nose; your game is abundant—his scarce."

"Well, then, you think, as brother masters of hounds, I might spare a few hares to maintain his foxes?"

Fortescue was silent.

"Ah! I see; silence gives consent. It shall be, then, as you desire. I will protect foxes to this extent in my home coverts, that if any one is caught there in my keepers' traps, which are set alike for all four-footed vermin——"

Our friend started nearly out of his chair at his game being called vermin, which our host noticing, said quickly—

"I meant no offence to you or your pursuit, Fortescue; but foxes in this neighbourhood are considered vermin."

"Thank goodness, sir, they are not so considered in ours, or we should have little enjoyment of field sports during the winter, and few friends to partake of them. In our country foxhunting is dignified by the name of 'The Noble Science;' and we have one of the choicest professors of it at its head, who maintains a first-rate establishment at his own

expense for the recreation of himself and neighbours. What would younger sons during their vacations, professional men, farmers, tradesmen, and others, who have no ground to shoot over, do for occasional relaxation from business, without foxhounds or harriers? I can assure you, sir, our neighbourhood was the dullest of the dull until our great Squire came down to settle at his old place, and brought with him a pack of foxhounds. The change produced by this event is really marvellous. Friends who chanced to meet perhaps once a month at a dinner party, then known by name only, living out of visiting distance, now greet each other at the covert side three times, if they are so disposed, in the week, some galloping over the downs on their hacks to have a gallop with the hounds. The tillers of the soil are seen flocking together with their jovial faces. Parsons, proctors, tradesmen, doctors swell the meet, on their roadsters, cobs, and ponies, just to have a look at the hounds, and join in social chat, before the business of the day begins. All appear with cheerful countenances. Many introductions are made; people become acquainted who, save for foxhunting, might have been strangers for life. In short, sir, the animals you are pleased to call 'vermin' have been productive of more social intercourse between man and man—bringing also the lower and higher classes into communion and good fellowship—than all the hares and pheasants in the British Isles put together."

"*Ohe! jam satis,*" exclaimed our host. "Pray forgive me, Fortescue, the *lapsus linguæ* of classing

your friend Reynard amongst vermin. Until now that you have enlightened me upon the subject, I was not aware of the benefit this little animal confers upon mankind. For the future, however, his claims to protection shall not be overlooked by me; and, as I was about to proceed when that unfortunate epithet fell from my lips, if any fox should inadvertently be trapped by my keepers, he shall be immediately conveyed to your friend's house; and should a litter of cubs be laid up in my home preserves, which are small coppices only, they shall be dug out alive with their mother, and sent also to the kennel. In the larger woods, lying about a mile distant, I am not so particular about game, generally killing all pretty closely down by the end of the season. No steel-traps shall be set again; and your friend is most welcome to hunt them as often as he pleases—in moderation, of course; and there also the cubs, as well as the foxes, shall be protected for his amusement and that of our neighbours who prefer hunting to shooting."

Our very grateful thanks were tendered for the kind compliance with our request. Less we had anticipated—more we had no reason to expect. To turn a game preserver, with all his prejudices strongly enlisted against our game, into a fox preserver all at once, or at all, we foresaw would be a very difficult, if not impossible, undertaking.

> A man convinced against his will,
> Is of the same opinion still.

Game preservers and gamekeepers appear to have a natural antipathy to foxhunting. Yet is it not

natural? Since the time of Nimrod the love of hunting or venery has been natural to mankind; and it is nowhere so generally displayed as by the inhabitants of our British Isles. From rich to poor, from childhood to manhood, men were not only "deceivers," but hunters ever of some kind of game. Rabbit-hunting and rat-catching are to the boy what fox-hunting is to the man. They follow the instinctive impulses of their nature, as dogs and other animals of prey do theirs. It may be a humiliating confession, yet the fact is so. Nimrod was a mighty hunter; and we find the privilege of hunting and capturing animals, birds, and fishes conferred in these words upon Noah and his descendants:—"The fear of you, and the dread of you, shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you." Reasonably, therefore, we may say that hunting is our natural sport—battue shooting unnatural, because it involves no risk, no excitement, no labour, no use of skill or science in the acquirement of our game; and it is like a wholesale haul of herrings or mackerel in comparison with hooking and landing a salmon of twenty pounds weight.

Well, we don't quarrel with people merely because our opinions, tastes, and pursuits differ, or we should be for ever quarrelling. We may, however, offer this piece of advice to game preservers, who too often pretend to preserve foxes also—secretly con-

niving at their destruction by their keepers, or, what is tantamount to the same thing, asking no questions. Let them follow the example of the gentleman we have above cited. Rather than permit the cubs and foxes to be killed, they may protect them to this extent, without the hollow profession of preserving them. There are, we know, many game preservers who act fairly and above-ground towards foxes—and we give them all honour for this forbearance and kind consideration of their neighbours' sport—but there are others who had rather that the foxes which visit their coverts should be put underground.

The only time of the year when foxes do commit depredations upon pheasants is when the hen birds are sitting upon their nests outside the preserves; and a hungry vixen with cubs may occasionally fall upon one or two in her rambles. Yet very rarely indeed does this occur where there are rabbits, which are certainly the favourite food of foxes. In fact, we have often watched the movements of vixen foxes when leaving their cubs in search of prey, and their first have been invariably directed in pursuit of rabbits. There is, moreover, a natural protection to all birds sitting on their nests in the absence of any scent from their bodies to attract their enemies to the spot.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The wiliness and caution of foxes—Easily scared from poultry and pheasant pens—Ill-founded charges against rooks—Gamekeepers and poachers—Travelling in the last century—Old fox and dairy-maid—Innocency of cubs—Feathered game on the wing, before they have left home—The gamekeeper's scapegoat.

THERE is not an animal with which we are acquainted more cautious in his movements than the fox—from this peculiarity called "wily," an epithet he is most justly entitled to. Perhaps we might make exception in favour of deer, as they appear equally on the move when danger threatens them. Deerstalkers have discovered the inutility of attempting to gain a near proximity to a wild stag down wind, even when apparently sleeping on his bed of heather. The slightest taint or *si mavis* scent emanating from mankind, borne upon the breeze, rouses him in a moment from his lethargy; and, springing to his feet, he looks around for a second, then gallops away to some rising ground, where he may watch more securely the advent of his enemy. Although unseen, equally avoided is the track of man by the wily fox. Poachers and keepers are so well acquainted with this fact, that, when setting traps for them, they generally besmear their shoes with sheep's offal, to nullify their own scent; and we have heard fox-stealers say, that when setting

a live trap, called a witch, at the mouth of the earth, they never visited the trap except once in twenty-four hours, or an old fox would lie sulky there for a week before venturing out: and to prove how easily they are scared away from committing depredations upon poultry, we can state this as a fact of some service to farmers and breeders of pheasants:—

For three years in succession we have raised from sixty to a hundred head of turkeys and chickens on a piece of moorland, within two hundred yards of the wood hedge of a very large fox-covert, in which no less than five litters of cubs were reported by the woodman to be laid down the season before last. The only protection to this host of the feathered tribe consisted of a penning made of wattled hurdles, four feet high, with a piece of twine netting raised above the hurdles on stakes six feet high, and at intervals strips of red cloth attached to them, floating in the breeze. The coops containing the hen birds were placed within this enclosure, where the chickens remained day and night for three months during the summer, although allowed to roam about the moor at certain hours of the day. A light net was also thrown over the coops at nightfall, when we visited the penning for the last time, and walked round it to see all was secure. Thus situated, with no other protection, we have raised our poultry for three years; and not a single chicken has ever been carried away by a fox, although we have often seen their footmarks within a few yards of the forbidden fruit.

More than this, there are kites, hawks, ravens,

crows, magpies, and jays continually hovering over the ground. Rooks innumerable, of which we take no notice; but from seven hen turkeys, invariably making their nests and laying their eggs in the heather, we have not lost seven eggs. This is not all. Within fifty yards of our penning there were hatched out this last summer two coveys of partridges. Now some sceptics will exclaim, "How can these things be?" They are facts. The bit of netting, with our red pennon waving with the wind, scares away the fox—the midnight robber—and the gleam of our gun-barrel in the sun warns the birds of prey—*Procul, oh procul, este profani!* We never set traps or lay poison for any of these obnoxious vermin. On the contrary, we watch with pleasure and admiration the graceful evolutions in the air of three, four, or five large kites, wheeling, screaming, and sometimes swooping down within a few yards of our protegés; yet we do not send the bullet hurtling through the air to their destruction. The barrel is raised aloof to warn them that this is forbidden fruit and forbidden ground, and that warning proves sufficient. Crows are more impudent, and we are occasionally under the necessity of riddling their jackets for a too near approach.

Ravens, like foxes, are very wary, and, although continually flying and croaking over the moor, have never done us any harm. Now, if one man, with a paddle much oftener in his hand than a gun, can thus protect young poultry and game from the depredations of these beasts and birds of prey perpetually crossing this tract of land, how is it that a

staff of keepers and watchers cannot do the same thing, without having recourse to steel traps and poison? If game-preserving continues to increase as it has for the last few years, all these beautiful birds, although birds of prey, will soon disappear entirely from the British Isles, as the bustard has from the Wiltshire downs, when the spread of cultivation extended over that once magnificent prairie of our country. Kites and ravens travel miles and miles away from their nesting-places in search of food, and the latter more frequently subsist on carrion than young game, feathered or furred; and as to their killing old game, *credat Judeus appella*. The raven is not fitted by nature to pursue and catch game. He is too unwieldy and clumsy a bird for this purpose; but, gifted with extraordinary keenness of scent, he is seen winging his way to some distant spot where lies the carcase of some animal mouldering to decay; or, if within reach of the sea-shore, thither does instinct direct him in search of fish left on the sands by the receding tide. We have been accustomed to ravens from childhood, these birds having been protected almost with religious care by our ancestors for many generations, their nest in the old king oak containing at least a cartload of sticks and other building materials. There they have been permitted to live unmolested and bring up their young, which, when able to provide for themselves, took their flight to some more distant woods, one pair of birds only ever remaining with us.

The buzzard and dun kite also found a home and protection in our coverts; and as for rooks, every

tree in the park, and even the large laurels around the house, were loaded with their nests; and to give some idea of their countless numbers, the sky was positively darkened as they hovered over us before descending to their roosting-places in the lofty elm and oak trees which surrounded the lawn. In the face of all these supposed enemies to game, we always had an abundance of it; and partridges particularly were so numerous that we could kill during September our thirty brace a day, if required. The land also under cultivation was never more productive than at that period. These are stubborn facts, which may be cavilled at by game preservers of the present day; but they are, nevertheless, perfectly true, and could be vouched for by old men living in the neighbourhood, besides ourselves.

Now, as rooks have been accused of sucking eggs, and even killing young ducks and chickens, we leave these assertions to be digested by those who have so mistaken their natural calling. Our poultry yard stood in the midst of this huge colony of "black barons of the wood," where they were seen strutting about, as over the lawns and gardens, in perfect security; yet the loss of chicken or duckling was never charged against them. Perhaps it may be that out of gratitude to their protectors such forbearance was exhibited towards the young poultry. No matter from what cause, our statements of these facts cannot be contravened.

There were only one keeper and one woodman to look over the home manor of some fifteen hundred acres of wood and land; and, besides partridges in

such profusion, we had a fair show of pheasants and hares—quite as many as were required for our own family and friends; but, at that time, not a rabbit existed on the property. Our greatest enemies were poachers, who did not, however, as now, assemble very often in large bands, our preserves not being sufficiently well stocked to pay for such combined nocturnal visitations. Yet were there a few deep artful thieves of this fraternity, who ventured single-handed, or in small parties, to knock pheasants off their roosts on windy moonlight nights. But our keeper at that time proved more than a sufficient match for two or three such men, even unaided, although he always had the command of assistants whensoever they were needed. He had chosen, when young, the prize-ring for his profession, being an active, athletic young man, and had gone into training for this purpose in London, when his uncle, a respectable farmer in our parish, not approving the line of life marked out by himself, persuaded his nephew to return to the country, and occupy the situation of gamekeeper, then vacant, in our family.

He accordingly came down; and, being brought over by his uncle, and highly recommended as a young man of great promise, his services were accepted, and he was forthwith installed in office. Ours, however, not being a house to be visited by rich or poor without an introduction to better things, uncle and nephew were returning home, with heads a little elated, when they must needs make a call upon the host of a small wayside public-house, wherein were assembled a motley group of poachers

and blackguards of every description, who, on hearing from the landlord that the nephew of farmer Hancock had just been taken by the Squire as keeper, ventured most impudently to utter threats and anathemas against persons undertaking such discreditable offices, declaring how they would serve him if attempting to interfere with their amusements; but the young keeper, not relishing the language addressed to him, soon set the matter in dispute on a right footing, by dealing his services around upon his assailants *more* Tom Spring, knocking one fellow first off his pins, and then two or three to tumble over him; so that, with the co-operation of uncle H., they were soon like the army of Sennacherib, all dead corpses—at least *hors-de-combat*—in less time than it has taken me to relate the encounter. This onslaught and terrific dealing with his opponents taught our country yokels to keep their heads a long way out of milling distance from the new keeper, who, sooth to say, was as expert at single-stick or back-sword as with his mawleys. Moreover, he was a wide-awake fellow, out all night—not at a public-house, but on his beat or rounds — and sleeping by day. In short, he turned out just the man we wanted; and as at that time, between school and college, little of our time was spent at home, he shot game also in large quantities, with which my father never seemed satisfied, having so many friends to supply with this commodity.

In those times there were no iron roads, no handy stations at which baskets of game might be left for

immediate transit, as now, by poachers. Conveyances were rare and slow, roads bad—parish ditto nearly impassable in certain seasons, or in very bad weather: and, to show how very bad they must have been many years anterior to our entering on our pilgrimage in this wicked world, we may mention the fact of our great-grandmother being dragged to the parish church, only two miles distant, in the family coach by six long-tailed black horses; not only that, but so great was the toil to horses considered, that our venerated great-grandmother took her dinner with the parson, and returned home after evening service.

In our boyish days foxes did not abound in our coverts, as they were never drawn by foxhounds, and therefore not strictly preserved; but we remember one grey-headed old monster, of the true greyhound breed, which had made his kennel upon the top of a high ivy-clad wall, overhanging the poultry yard, whence he was wont to look down with longing eyes upon the feathered tribe below; but the dairymaid, who had charge of them, used to threaten him with her mop. "Ah! you old villain," she was wont to say; "you may peer out of your hiding-place, and welcome; but come down, if you dare, before nightfall, when my pets are shut up, and then you shall have your supper, as usual;" and, strange to relate, this old fox never did run counter to the dairymaid's orders, who always put his supper for him, consisting of offal, heads and necks of chickens, entrails of game, and other odds and ends, outside the back door, which the old gentleman regularly dispatched.

At that time we thought little, and cared less, about foxes; but a few years later in life they came more immediately under our own care and cognizance, and we studied their habits; and from this long study and observation, we have formed the conclusion, that those wily animals are far too wily to prove so destructive to game and poultry as short-sighted game preservers and long-sighted game-keepers would force upon our credulity. So long as cubs imbibe their mother's milk they are incapable of sucking blood from birds and four-footed game killed by their own prowess or cunning; and, as they do not arrive at *months* of discretion before the month of August, by which time young pheasants and partridges are on the wing, or ought to be, it is not very likely that many of these could fall to their share.

It is not a very easy matter to put your hat over a covey of young partridges or pheasants when under their mother's wing and watchful care; and when pheasants take to roosting on high, which they very soon do, we should like to see the fox-cub or old fox which can lure them from their perches by a magnetic fascination of his eye. Rest assured, ye lovers of the trigger, that our game is more sinned against than sinning. Your pheasants are too high exalted to fall into his mouth at his bidding; and if he does occasionally pick up a wounded bird, how are you the loser? He would perish from gangrene a day or two later. Your keepers tell you idle tales about foxes, because they interfere with their perquisites—rabbits. But this is not all: when the

number of pheasants is shortened by their own malpractices, there is no more convenient scapegoat than a fox. All that we could wish is that he were sent forth, like the goat from the camp of the Israelites, into the wilderness unscathed.

CHAPTER L.

Testimonials to huntsmen—The old capping custom—Beckford's anecdote—Hard and irregular life of these officials—Four days per week more agreeable than six—May foxes and July cubs—Pensions—Huntsmen to old established and subscription packs.

Capping has become obsolete—the fashion of the custom has passed away; and foxhunters of the present era may raise their eyebrows in surprise, and a curl of the hairy lip may denote their contempt of the practices so long countenanced by those who were supposed to have existed in a barbarous age. Many a reader of these pages will exclaim, "What does he mean by capping?"—perhaps handicapping. Not exactly in the same sense that term is now used as appertaining to racing; but, in its etymological meaning equally, if not more, correct. Capping signifies putting your hand in your pocket and drawing out a five-shilling or half-crown silver coin—formerly dropped into a cap held out for that purpose—to reward the huntsman for exhibiting the scene of tracing a fox, or rather killing him, since it did not invariably happen that a fox, even in those days, sought the shelter of woodlands to yield up his life.

We are told by Beckford that a huntsman accustomed to this usage had been offered by his master

a considerable sum of money, more than equivalent to what he had ever received in any one year previously as cap-money; but that, at the end of the season, he begged to return to the old custom, as nearly as we can recollect, in the following language:—"You have been generous, sir, in giving me this allowance, to which I have no claim, and it far exceeds my expectations; yet I have not now the same pleasure in killing my fox as under the old system." We could not accuse this huntsman of greediness, if the case so cited were true; and there can be no suspicion of its being incorrect, as cited by one of the most truthful of foxhunters. We must, therefore, dive into deeper water—to the bottom of the well, if we can—to explain the anomaly.

The huntsman of the old school had been accustomed to the practice of capping; it acted like a stimulant upon his nerves—it was something like dram drinking. The anticipation of dollars, half-crowns, and shillings being poured into his pouch on the death of the fox excited both his brain and frame to the greatest possible exertion; and not merely for filthy lucre's sake did he look forward to this recompence, but for the honour of the thing. Cash prices, quick returns, are, we are told, the life of trade; and huntsmen, like other professionals, are not wholly indifferent to pecuniary rewards for services rendered; but, as a general characteristic, we rarely find the talented of their class sordid-minded. Well paid they ought to be, and must be, to discharge their several and onerous duties efficiently. The great risks they incur to life and limb must

be taken also into account—not to mention their liability to colds, and other maladies, from exposure to the most inclement weather, and under peculiar circumstances.

Gentlemen can go fast or slow, as it pleases them, to the place of meeting—on horseback, or upon wheels; and in very bad weather they may be excused from appearing at all, it being merely optional whether they face the elements without or remain within doors. Not so with those to whom the management of the hounds is entrusted—huntsman and whippers-in. Whatever the weather may be, they must face it, and there is no escape from the pelting of the pitiless storm.

Other men can gallop out of it, and seek refuge in a public or farmhouse—their time is their own. A huntsman's belongs to his master, and he must be punctual to it. The same slow jog-trot pace with his hounds must be maintained throughout to the place of meeting; and, again, after the business of the day is over, through deluges of rain, snow-storms, or sleet. However biting the cold, officials have no chance of keeping themselves warm by increased exercise, like other men; all must be borne with patience and fortitude until their game is on foot.

But the most trying part of the whole day's work is the journey home after a long run, leaving off perhaps fifteen or twenty miles from the kennels, with lame hounds and jaded horses. We have heard of "Patience on a monument smiling at grief;" but we think a drenched huntsman, on a lame horse,

plodding his heavy way through muddy lanes, would form a more appropriate illustration to that cardinal virtue.

Strikes seem all the fashion of the day; but it strikes us that tailors have little cause to complain of hard usage and low wages, as it appears from statements in the papers that about two guineas per week has been their usual pay, which is higher than that received by the generality of huntsmen and whippers-in throughout the provinces, and whose time for work is not limited to twelve hours a day. It is true that, during the vacation—commencing with the close of the hunting season, and extending to the first day of cubhunting—huntsmen and whips have no severe work to undergo; and, fortunately, it happens so to them, as well as to the horses and hounds, that the bow is not always bent, that there is some time for relaxation and recreation In some countries, however, the respite is very short—where they kill their May fox, and begin cubhunting in July.

Foxhunting is a very agreeable and exhilarating amusement to those who can go out only when they like and go home when they like; and, although there are many gentlemen who would hunt every day in the week if they could, we doubt not that professionals would prefer four days to six, if permitted to express their candid sentiments upon this point.

Irregular habits of living are denounced by physicians as very detrimental to health; and what class of servants lives more irregularly than those who contribute so much to our amusement in the

hunting-field? Barring breakfast, they have no other meal during the day. Indoor domestics get their snap luncheon at eleven, dinner at one, tea at five, and supper at nine; in fact, it would appear that doing a good deal of eating and drinking and a very little work, is the chief purpose for which they are hired and paid; whereas huntsmen and whips are obliged to condense all their meals into one, and that taken at a very uncertain hour, varying from six to nine in the evening, as they may happen to return from hunting; and we know by experience that long abstinence, coupled with hard work, is not likely to improve a man's digestive powers, or give him an appetite for dinner. The late Assheton Smith, after hunting, always indulged in a warm bath before sitting down to dinner; but such a luxury does not fall to the lot of Jem or Jack, although they get plenty of cold ones.

In several large foxhunting establishments, of ancient date and high renown, where the hounds are handed down from father to son as heirlooms in the family, it is the custom—which cannot be too highly commended—of rewarding meritorious huntsmen, when unfitted by age or accident for active service, with a retiring pension. Unfortunately, however, from the changes continually occurring in the masterships of the great majority, such customs are confined to the few; and, as a general rule, huntsmen and whippers-in must depend upon their own resources, and whilst in health save what they can out of their wages to soften the asperities of declining years. This may be effected to some extent by those who

hold first-class preferment for several seasons in fashionable districts, but is not easy of attainment by others located in the provinces, where the fields are very select, and *douceurs* consequently scanty.

Huntsmen and whippers-in are generally regarded in the light of public servants; and where the expenses of the establishment are borne by the master, gentlemen who hunt regularly with his hounds deem it imperative to assist the officials, who afford them so much amusement, without any other pull upon their pockets. Members of a subscription hunt may say with some justice, "We pay your master for your services; he charges us with all the expenses incidental to his establishment—the maintenance of servants, horses, hounds, and all etceteras; therefore you have no reason to expect extra remuneration from us."

This, in many cases, is true enough; and we have known instances where subscribers have assumed a superiority over the master, by insisting upon the dismissal of a huntsman or whipper-in falling short of their requirements. Probably some of my readers may have heard of the unenviable position of a "toad under a harrow:" it is a very old, though not very elegant, adage—supposed to be a very accurate description, in a few words, of a man labouring under distracting difficulties, tossed about from pillar to post, as the unfortunate reptile is from time to time by the implement over his head.

If not actually obliged to perform the part of toad, subscription masters are often accused of acts

of toadyism; there is a difference in terms, yet not much distinction in reality. Men with ambitious views are often led into unpleasant situations, from which, when thoroughly committed, they find great difficulty—moral courage we mean—in retrograding; not exactly like the thin mouse who got through a small chink into a corn-bin, and soon found his carcase so expanded that he could not get out again. Well, this is no concern of ours. If men choose to take the management of a subscription country, we can only pity them, and feel also commiseration for servants required to please so many masters, which is, of course, a hopeless case.

When the master pays for all it is altogether of a different complexion; and men of liberal ideas, having their fun gratis, consider themselves bound to give gratuities to the officials, more or less, according to their means; hence has arisen the practice of presenting testimonials to those, on retiring from office, who have for many years exercised their best abilities in promoting their sport.

CHAPTER LI.

THE LAST OF HIS ENTRY.

We are instigated by no idle curiosity to inquire what becomes of "the brave old hound, the bonny old hound," who has spent the best years of his hard-worked life in the service of his master; who has been petted, and cheered—and painted too, perhaps, in his prime—depended upon for his welcome note in later years, when, save for old Solon, everything would have gone wrong. What, we ask, is the fate of this old favourite and faithful hound when his strength and power fail? Is he rewarded as he ought to be? Does he retire, when unfitted for active life, to enjoy some *otium cum dignitate?* Is not more often a halter provided for him than a home? Or is he not bundled out of the kennel, with what is called the old draft hounds, which have done amiss, and shipped for the Continent or India, to undergo tortures and ill-usage worse than death. Evil-doers must, we know, be drafted, and some hounds will go wrong, even in their fourth or fifth season; but, for the faultless and faithful, against whom no other charge can be preferred except that common to man as well as to any other animal in the creation—old age, surely some consideration ought to be found befitting a master's gratitude for

the fidelity and services of an old and well-tried servant. To send such a one from his home, to be buffeted and knocked about by strangers and foreigners in another land, is a blot—a crimson one—on the escutcheon of any foxhunter, which nothing can wipe out.

"Poor old fellow! put him out of his misery!" which means, give him a charge of powder and shot through his honest old heart; a dose of strychnine to paralyse those limbs for ever which have now grown slow in his master's service; or a blow from the feeder's poleaxe to knock out those brains by the aid of which the pack has been so often led on to victory. Although not particularly thin-skinned or over soft-hearted, we have ever borne in mind that golden maxim—"Justice extends to the brute creation;" and we should as placidly think of committing suicide upon our *propriam personam* as of handing over a faithful horse or hound to be poleaxed or Calcrafted.

There may be a deal of fanciful imagination entering into our mind when indulging such exploded sentiments; perhaps we may be accused of entertaining monomaniacal and eccentric notions upon this subject. It is not the custom or fashion of the day to exhibit feeling for anybody or anything save our noble selves. Loving your neighbour as yourself is regarded as a silly phantasy, originating in some weak-minded mortal, not as the imperative command of the "Most High."

The life of a foxhound is a hard one—the life of a hunter still harder. The first has to cater for

himself only—the last for self and master also. Yet it so happens that the hound has done his work nearly about the time that the horse has begun his in earnest. At seven years old the hunter is in his prime, whilst by the end of that period the career of a foxhound is nearly, if not quite, brought to a close; double these years, and the hunter sees the last of his season. Now, strictly speaking, as a general rule, a dog of seven years, in any other than a foxhunting establishment, is not a worn-out helpless old animal. Some dogs enjoy the use of all their faculties—speed, perhaps, excepted—until they have reached double that age. In short, we have known many dogs with their sense of hearing, seeing, and scenting unimpaired until reaching their sixteenth year; and we have been told of others attaining the age of twenty-one before ordered out for execution.

Dogs of all other denominations appear to be endowed with greater longevity than foxhounds, which, from their symmetry, bodily prowess, and courage, might be supposed to surpass every other variety of the canine species; and yet we find a bandy-legged cur, without one single point of bodily form in his favour, going on his beat of life years after a foxhound of the same age has been contributing to the growth of apples. How does this happen? Is the foxhound really a deceiver? Have we partially invested him with powers and endurance beyond his nature? Not so; but the course of his feeding is the cause of his failing. It has been ascertained, and proved beyond contradiction,

that animals of the carnivorous kind never attain a good old age—in other words, live the natural and allotted years—upon farinaceous food only; and we know full well that oatmeal porridge, with the best of broth, is not the diet to support man or hound under severe labour. Bread has been called "the staff of life;" yet to a very limited extent is it so. The poor man, without his bit of bacon or fresh meat occasionally—a sup of milk or buttermilk with his potatoes, and a taste of dripping with his other vegetables—would find bread alone unequal to sustain him. We are too prone to put our faith of sustenance upon bread alone.

In warmer climates farinaceous aliment may suffice to keep body and soul together, where great exertions under a tropical sun cannot be maintained but in colder climates stronger fuel is necessary to keep the furnace going. A visit to the Zoological Gardens at feeding time will satisfy any sceptic that lions, tigers, and animals of that class are not presented with a bowlful of porridge or soup for their supper; but, instead of this, a large bone of cow or horse, with little meat upon it, is thrown into their dens, this being their only meal during the twenty-four hours. Such was the course of feeding in the days when we were in the habit of paying them frequent visits. If, therefore, animal food in the most indigested form is considered necessary to maintain these animals in health without any exercise, save that of pacing up and down their narrow dens, is it not obvious that those of a like nature require the greatest possible amount of nutritive food to support

their natural constitutions under severe and continued exertions?

We have had occasion to remark more than once upon the useless incumbrance of a too numerous body of hounds maintained in many large establishments of the present day; and although Mr. Meynell, in his early career of M.F.H., made that greatest of all mistakes, in depending upon numerical strength—taking nearly a hundred couples of hounds into the field—by sowing his wild oats in this manner he very soon became aware of the exceedingly wild practice he had been pursuing. We need not again quote the opinion of our hunting poet, Somerville, upon this subject—who, by the way, must have been well blooded to fox and hare to write as he has so accurately upon all things appertaining to those sports, entering also into details which we should suppose no other than an experienced master of hounds could be acquainted with.

The work of a foxhound is not more severe, in the season, than that of a pointer, setter, or spaniel, and yet these latter are going on and doing their master good service long after the former has been discarded, simply because they have been better fed and cared for. No man could be trained upon mutton broth and porridge to win a prize fight or a boat race. Liquids and farinaceous food will not alone suffice for such purposes. Take thirty couples of foxhounds, feed them twice a day, at the least, upon more flesh —not raw, or over-boiled to rags—than meal, and they will do more efficient work than double that number usually treated by the general system of

kennel diet. And there is another consideration of far greater consequence than the support of a useless number of hounds. *Experientia docet.* The longer a foxhound can hold his place in the pack, the more valuable he becomes. What a lot of teasers would that prove, consisting of six and seven-year-old hounds in their integrity! No fox would be so strong, no day so long, no scent so bad that these veterans could not cope with; and then the luxury, the complacency, the entire confidence with which we regard their proceedings can be appreciated only by those who have sat in a huntsman's saddle.

My brave old hound, my bonny old hound,
Here's a health, here's a health to thee!
And as years roll round, may'st thou still be found
Alongside in the chase with me.
Many's the day we have hunted away,
And many's the track we have set;
And now I am told, that thou'rt grown old—
But there's life in the old hound yet.

How oft has thy voice made the hunters rejoice,
When its deep mellow tones were heard;
For well did they know that thy startled foe
Must go his best pace on the sward;
Thou hast followed the chase with untiring pace
From morn till the sun has set,
Thou hast lain at my feet, when thy heart scarcely beat—
But there's life in the old hound yet.

Once did I think, when on the steep brink
Of a dark shining rock thou stood,
That thy race was run, that thy life was done,
As thou leapt o'er the yawning flood;
When thou fell on the rocks with the beaten fox
I thought a hard fate thou hadst met;
But we found thee below with thy conquered foe,
Aye—and life in the old hound yet.

Thy coat is now grey, and thy strength doth decay,
But thy heart is as brave and as true
As when first we went forth on the hills in the north,
In pursuit of the fleet-footed crew.
Men are to be found, who would kill the old hound,
And his long years of service forget,
But a hand I'll ne'er lend to destroy my old friend,
While there's life in the old hound yet.

There's many a lass I've loved is dead,
And many a friend grown old,
And unless with thee to the woodlands led,
This weary heart grows cold;
But as o'er hill and dale I fly,
With thy voice to madden my brain,
All, all's forgot, as I shout to thee,
"Yoicks! have at him, old hound, again!"

THE END.

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